THE PROPHETIC BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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Biblical Introduction Series

THE PROPHETIC BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THEIR ORIGIN, CONTENTS, AND SIGNIFICANCE

BY

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VOLUME II

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN

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CHAPTER VII

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

1. The Book

Name and Place in the Canon. The name Ezekiel —Hebrew יְחֶזְקֵאל, *Yeḥezḳel,* Septuagint, Ἰεζεκιήλ *Iezekiél,* Vulgate, *Ezechiel*—means "God is strong" or "God strengthens." While the position of the book in the canon can be discussed only in connection with Isaiah and Jeremiah,[1] there are a few questions regarding the canonicity of the book of Ezekiel which may receive consideration here. From Ecclesiasticus 49. 8 it appears that the book was a part of the prophetic canon[2] in the days of Jesus ben Sirach, that is, not far from 200 B. C.; nevertheless, its canonicity was called in question by Jewish teachers[3] at different times during the succeeding centuries. One of the principal objections urged against the book was that in a number of instances it contradicted the books of Moses; and for a time it was in real danger of being excluded from public reading.[4] It was saved for the Jewish church by Hananiah, the son of Hezekiah, the son of Garon, a younger contemporary of Hillel: "But as for Hananiah, the son of Hezekiah—blessed be his memory—if it had not been for him, the book of Ezekiel would have been hidden[5] because its

[1] See vol. I, pp. 113-115.

[2] See vol. I, pp. 9, 111.

[3] Objections were raised also againt Esther, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Jonah.

[4] *Menachoth,* 45a.

[5] That is, it would have been withdrawn from public use and reduced to the position of an apocryphal book.

words contradict the words of the Torah. What did he do? They brought him three hundred measures of oil; and he sat down and explained it."[6] The effort proved so successful that at a later time the book was quoted as possessing equal authority with the Torah, at least in ceremonial matters.[7] The obscurity of certain passages, notably the vision in chapter 1 and the constitution of the restored community in chapters 40 to 48, presented another difficulty which threatened the standing of the entire book.[8] Finally, however, all objections were overcome, and the position of Ezekiel in the canon of sacred writings became permanently established.

Contents and Outline. The book of Ezekiel falls naturally into three divisions, each dealing with a particular subject: (1) Chapters 1 to 24, the sin of Judah and its punishment; (2) chapters 25 to 32, oracles against foreign nations; (3) chapters 33 to 48, Israel's future restoration; (*a*) chapters 33 to 39, prophecies of restoration, (*b*) chapters 40 to 48, the constitution of the restored Israel.

The insertion of the oracles against foreign nations between the threats of judgment and the promises of restoration is an illustration of the constructive skill which planned the arrangement of the book: (1) The prophecies fill up the interval of silence between the two periods of Ezekiel's ministry;[9] (2) the destruction of the foreign

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[6] *Sabbath*, 13b; *Chagigah*, 13a, b.

[7] *Moed Ḳatan*, 5a.

[8] According to Jerome (*Præfatio ad Ezechiel*), these obscure portions were forbidden to be read by any Jew under thirty years of age.

[9] Chapter 24 records the dramatic close of the first period of Ezekiel's activity, on the day when the Chaldeans invested Jerusalem; chapters 33ff. contain the addresses delivered by Ezekiel after the report of the fall of Jerusalem had reached him.

nations is represented as one step in the preparation for the return of the exiled Jews: as long as the foreign nations are allowed to prosper they will constitute a serious menace to the small Jewish community that is to be reestablished in Palestine; (3) the moral and religious corruption of Israel in the past was due in large measure to contact with foreign nations;[10] if the lapses of the past are to be avoided, the source of these evil influences must be destroyed before the exiles are permitted to return.

The following, then, is the thought development in the book as a whole: In the first twenty-four chapters the prophet stresses judgment as a punishment for sin, the principal item in the judgment being the destruction of the holy city. The report of the fall of Jerusalem filled the exiles with despair; they feared that the end had surely come. In the midst of the people's despair Ezekiel stepped forward and pointed out that a new era was about to dawn and that a new Jerusalem was to rise from the ruins of the old. Three aspects of the restoration are elaborated in the remaining twenty-four chapters: (1) The preparation for the return through the destruction of the hostile powers;[11] (2) the restoration of the exiles to the promised land;[12] (3) the constitution on the basis of which the life of the restored community is to be organized.[13]

I. The Sin of Judah and Its Punishment (1. 1 to 24. 27)

1. Ezekiel's call and initiation into the prophetic office (1. 1 to 3. 21).

[10] Ezek. 28. 24-26; 29. 16.
[11] Chapters 25 to 32.
[12] Chapters 33 to 39.
[13] Chapters 40 to 48.

(1) Ezekiel's inaugural vision (1. 1-28).
a. Time of the vision (1. 1-3).
b. The four living creatures (1. 4-14).
c. The four-sided chariot with four wheels (1. 15-21).
d. The glory of Yahweh (1. 22-28).
(2) Ezekiel's appointment as a prophet (2. 1 to 3. 21).
a. Opposition to be encountered (2. 1-7).
b. Eating of the roll inscribed with Yahweh's message (2. 8 to 3. 3).
c. Appointment as "watchman unto the house of Israel" (3. 4-21).
(3. 22-27, temporary withdrawal from public activity.)

2. Utter destruction of Judah and Jerusalem (4. 1 to 7. 27).
(1) Four symbolical actions (4. 1 to 5. 4).
a. Siege of Jerusalem (4. 1-3).
b. Length of the exile (4. 4-8).
c. Privations and exile (4. 9-17).
d. Slaughter and dispersion (5. 1-4).
(2) Three discourses of condemnation (5. 5 to 7. 27).
a. Doom of Jerusalem (5. 5-17).
b. Devastation of the land (6. 1-14).
c. Destruction of the inhabitants (7. 1-27).

3. Yahweh's withdrawal from the doomed Jerusalem (8. 1 to 11. 25).
(1) Idolatry in the temple precincts (8. 1-18).
(2) Slaughter of the inhabitants (9. 1-11).
(3) Burning of the city (10. 1-17).
(4) Yahweh's departure from the temple and the city (10. 18 to 11. 25).

4. The nation's sinfulness and inevitable doom (12. 1 to 19. 14).
(1) Two symbolical acts portraying the impending downfall of Jerusalem (12. 1-28).
(2) Lying prophets and the doom of the corrupt city (13. 1 to 14. 23).
(3) Two allegories teaching Jerusalem's ripeness for judgment (15. 1 to 16. 63).
a. The useless vine (15. 1-8).
b. The foundling child (16. 1-63).
(4) Disloyalty of Zedekiah and its consequences (17. 1-24).
(5) Moral freedom and individual responsibility (18. 1-32).
(6) Dirge over the fall of Judah and the ruling dynasty (19. 1-14).

5. Doom of Judah and Jerusalém (20. 1 to 24. 27).
   (1) Judah's persistent rebellion (20. 1-32).
   (2) Chastisement followed by restoration (20. 33-44).
   (3) Symbolic representation of the overthrow of Judah (20. 45-49; Hebr., 21. 1-5).
   (4) Imminence of Jerusalem's destruction (21. 1-32).
   (5) Total depravity and the inevitable judgment (22. 1-31).
   (6) Allegorical portrayal of the history of Judah and Israel (23. 1-49).
   (7) Allegorical portrayal of the siege and capture of Jerusalem (24. 1-14).
   (8) Death of Ezekiel's wife—symbol of the despair caused by the fall of the holy city (24. 15-27).

II. Prophecies Concerning Foreign Nations (25. 1 to 32. 32)

1. Ammon (25. 1-7).
2. Moab (25. 8-11).
3. Edom (25. 12-14).
4. Philistia (25. 15-17).
5. Tyre and Sidon (26. 1 to 28. 26).
   (1) Prophecy of the destruction of Tyre (26. 1-21).
   (2) Dirge over the downfall of Tyre (27. 1-35).
   (3) Prophecy against the king of Tyre (28. 1-19).
   (4) Destruction of Sidon, restoration of Israel (28. 20-26).
6. Egypt—a series of oracles (29. 1 to 32. 32).
   (1) Destruction of the Pharaoh and his people (29. 1-12).
      (29. 13-16, Restoration of Egypt as the basest of the kingdoms.)
   (2) Conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar (29. 17-21).
   (3) Complete and speedy overthrow of Egypt (30. 1-19).
   (4) Recent and imminent disasters (30. 20-26).
   (5) Cutting down of the Pharaoh and his multitudes (31. 1-18).
   (6) Dirge over Egypt's disgrace (32. 1-16).
   (7) Dirge over the Pharaoh and his army (32. 17-32).

III. Prophecies of the Restoration (33. 1 to 48. 35)

1. Restoration of the exiles to the promised land (33. 1 to 39. 29).
   (1) Responsibilities of the prophetic office (33. 1-33).
      a. The prophet as a watchman (33. 1-9).
      b. Individual responsibility (33. 10-20).
      c. Blindness and stubbornness of the exiles (33. 21-33).

(2) The shepherding care of Yahweh (34. 1-31).
a. Removal of the evil shepherds (34. 1-10).
b. Yahweh the good shepherd (34. 11-22).
c. The prince of the dynasty of David (34. 23-31).
(3) Contrast between the destiny of Edom and that of Israel (35. 1 to 36. 38).
a. Edom a perpetual desolation (35. 1-15).
b. Exaltation and felicity of Israel (36. 1-15).
c. Vindication of the deity of Yahweh (36. 16-38).
(4) The restored Israel and the Messianic king (37. 1-28).
a. National resurrection and restoration (37. 1-14).
b. Blessings of the future (37. 15-23).
c. Rule of Yahweh and of the Messianic king (37. 24-28).
(5) Yahweh's final triumph over the nations (38. 1 to 39. 29).
a. Attack upon Israel by Gog and his hosts (38. 1-16).
b. Annihilation of the enemies of Israel and of Yahweh (38. 17 to 39. 20).
c. Yahweh's supremacy and Israel's restoration (39. 21-29).

2. Constitution of the restored community (40. 1 to 48. 35).
(1) Extent and splendor of the new sanctuary (40. 1 to 43. 27).
a. The new sanctuary with its courts and chambers (40. 1 to 42. 20).
b. Return of Yahweh to the Temple (43. 1-12).
c. The altar and provisions for the dedication of the Temple (43. 13-27).
(2) Regulations concerning the administration of the new community (44. 1 to 46. 24).
a. Permanent closing of the eastern gate (44. 1-3).
b. Exclusion of foreigners from the Temple service (44. 4-9).
c. Levites and priests (44. 10-14).
d. Conduct of the priests and support of the Temple service (44. 15 to 45. 12).
e. Sacrifices and sacred days (45. 13 to 46. 24).
(3) Disposition of the tribes in the holy land (47. 1 to 48. 35).
a. The life-giving river (47. 1-12).
b. Boundaries and division of the land (47. 13-23).
c. Portion of the seven northern tribes (48. 1-7).

d. Portion of Yahweh (48. 8-22).
e. Portion of the five southern tribes (48. 23-29).
f. The twelve gates of the holy city (48. 30-35).

Origin of the Book. Some of the prophecies in the book are definitely dated as to year, month, and day. The dates given may be tabulated as follows:

Passage	Date Given			Modern Equivalent	
	Day	Month	Year	Month	Year
Ezek. 1. 1, 2	5	4	5	July	593 B. C.[14]
3. 16	12	4	5	July	593
8. 1	5	6	6	September	592
20. 1	10	5	7	August	591
24. 1	10	10	9	January	588
26. 1	1	11[15]	12[16]	February	585
29. 1	12	10	10	January	587
29. 17	1	1	27	April	571
30. 20	7	1	11	April	587
31. 1	1	3	11	June	587
32. 1	1	12	12	March	585
32. 17	15	12?[17]	12	March	585
33. 21	5	10	12	January	585
40. 1	10	1 or 7[18]	25	April or October	573

[14] Jehoiachin was carried away in 597 B. C. If that is reckoned the first year of his captivity the fifth year is 593; if, however, as some think, the following year should be reckoned the first, the fifth would be 592. In other words, on the basis of the latter interpretation the numbers given in the last column would all have to be lowered by one. Compare G. B. Gray, *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 200.

[15] The number of the month is supplied conjecturally. According to verse 2 the prophecy was delivered after the news of the fall of Jerusalem had been brought to the prophet; according to 33. 21 the news was received on the fifth day of the tenth month of the twelfth year, which means that 26. 1 cannot refer to an earlier date; hence the suggestion that the eleventh month is intended.

[16] From the facts stated in the preceding note it appears that the prophecy must have been delivered later than the date given in 33. 21; hence the "eleven" of the original is changed to "twelve."

[17] The number of the month is not in the original; on the basis of 32. 1 the number "twelve" is supplied.

[18] It is uncertain whether the reference is to the Babylonian or the Jewish year. In the former case the date would be in the spring, in the latter case, in the fall.

A few explanatory observations may be added to the table: (1) On the whole, the dates appear in regular chronological order. Complete regularity is secured by the omission of chapters 25 to 32, the prophecies against foreign nations; the arrangement of the latter is logical rather than chronological; only the prophecies centering around the same nation, Egypt, in chapters 29 to 32, are grouped chronologically.[19] (2) There is insufficient reason for questioning the accuracy of the chronological notes. With the exception of 26. 1ff., where an emendation is proposed, the prophecies may well have originated at the times suggested.[20] (3) The dates given apply only to the prophecies immediately following; no inferences may be drawn from them regarding the origin of the undated prophecies or their arrangement. Indeed, even the dates furnished must be checked by the contents; while in the case of the undated prophecies internal evidence constitutes the only available basis of decision.[21] (4) In the absence of conclusive internal evidence it is no easy task to determine the origin of the undated prophecies; perhaps it is not possible to do more than to distribute the utterances between the two periods sepa-

[19] With the exception of 29. 17ff., which is in the nature of an appendix.

[20] In 8.1; 20.1; 29. 1; 32. 1; 32. 17; 40. 1 the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew, but in each case the latter is to be preferred.

[21] Many writers have assumed that a given date covers all the prophecies between it and the next date mentioned. For instance, it is thought that 3. 16 fixes the date of all the prophecies up to 7. 27, and 8. 1 the date of everything up to 19. 14, etc. (See the table in H. A. Redpath, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, p. xv.) However, a close study shows that this assumption is unwarranted. (See, for instance, Kraetzschmar, *Ezechiel*, pp. 71, 72.) Even the modified contention that the general chronological order of the undated prophecies may be inferred from the arrangement of the dated prophecies is without adequate support.

rated by the receipt of the news of the fall of Jerusalem.[22] To the earlier period belong the prophecies which refer to the fall of Jerusalem as still in the future; to the later period the prophecies which refer to it as an accomplished fact.[23]

Until very recently few scholars thought it necessary to devote any space to a discussion of the genuineness or integrity of the book. Even Driver disposes of the question in a single sentence: "No critical question arises in connection with the authorship of the book, the whole from beginning to end bearing unmistakably the stamp of a single mind."[24] In the same spirit Gray writes: "It is the work of Ezekiel, a priest, who was one of the captives of the year 597 B. C. . . . The question of sources arises just as little as the question of integrity. . . . He incorporates no ancient priestly document, no earlier prophetic oracle, no Babylonian story in his book; he molds his material, whencesoever derived, into a work that bears throughout the stamp of his own personality."[25] The problem, however, is not quite as simple as these positive assertions might seem to indicate.

A few attempts have been made to prove that the book as a whole is postexilic in origin. Thus Zunz placed it in the Persian period, the latter part of the fifth century B. C.[26] Others have followed in the footsteps of Zunz,

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[22] Ezek. 33. 21.

[23] This does not mean that every prophecy of future restoration must be dated subsequently to the fall of the holy city; some of the promises regarding the more distant future may well have been delivered while the city was still standing, in anticipation of the imminent destruction.

[24] *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 279.

[25] *Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 199, 200.

[26] *Gottesdienstliche Vortraege der Juden*, 2d ed., 1892, pp. 165-170; *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft*, 1873, pp. 676-

repeating his arguments and expanding them. Seinecke, for instance, assigns the book to the Maccabean period;[27] Vernes treats it as a collection of fragments edited about 200 B. C.; Havet identifies Gog, in chapter 38, with the Parthians and thinks that chapters 40 to 48 were composed at the time when Herod the Great made plans for the rebuilding of the Temple. These extreme views have found no favor with the great body of scholars, and at present it is generally admitted that the book has a real and vital connection with the prophet Ezekiel.[28]

Some recent writers, without raising any question as to the connection of Ezekiel with the book, have expressed dissatisfaction with the easy-going manner in which scholars of a former generation and some belonging to the present generation have handled the book. They have felt that the facts presented in the book not only justify but actually demand the serious consideration of questions like these: (1) Are the prophecies recorded in the book based on spoken discourses or are they purely literary productions? (2) Granting that the individual prophecies originated with Ezekiel, were they collected by him into a "book of Ezekiel"? (3) Admitting that

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681. The principal arguments are: The non-mention of Ezekiel by Jeremiah; the presence of specific predictions such as are not found in the other prophetic books (12. 12, 13; 17. 22ff.); the improbability of a prophet drawing up a new constitution so soon after the destruction of the Temple; the use of material characteristic of the postexilic period, such as the treatment of angels in chapters 9, 10, the mention of late non-Jewish personages, the use of the name "Persia," etc.; imitation of Jeremiah; employment of the era of the exile; linguistic peculiarities, etc.

[27] *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, II, pp. 1-20. See also H. Winckler, *Forschungen*, III, pp. 135-155.

[28] For a brief discussion of the question, see *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Ezekiel."

Ezekiel made a collection of his prophecies, is the book in its present form identical with this collection or is it a later expansion of Ezekiel's own work?

In support of the claim that no spoken discourses underlie the book of Ezekiel, or, that Ezekiel was not a preacher but a writer,[29] arguments like these are adduced: (1) Many of the prophecies are addressed to people whom Ezekiel, who lived among the exiles, could not reach by word of mouth, such as the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the foreign nations condemned in chapters 25 to 32. (2) The contents of chapters 40 to 48 are of such a nature that it is impossible to believe that the detailed and technical descriptions of the Temple and its services found in these chapters were ever brought to the exiles in oral form. (3) Ezekiel himself admits, in 3. 26 and 24. 27, that he was dumb during the period in which the greater portion of his prophecies might be thought to have originated. (4) According to 2. 9ff., the word of Yahweh came to the prophet in the form of a book.

These arguments are, of course, in no sense conclusive: (1) All the more extensive prophetic books contain prophecies addressed to persons whom the prophet could not reach by word of mouth. The explanation is that these utterances, though addressed to others, had a significance for those to whom the prophet was talking: the direct address to the people concerning whom the prophet was making a declaration was intended as a literary device for the purpose of making the message

[29] Reuss states emphatically that there is not a single page in the book that may be assumed to contain a "publicly delivered address." Ezekiel, he insists, "was not a speaker but a writer" (*Die Propheten*, II, pp. 348, 349).

more striking and impressive. Such a device may be used in spoken discourse as readily as in a written production.[30] (2) Chapters 40 to 48, which are different from the rest of the book, may well have existed in written form from the beginning; but this admission regarding one part of the book throws no light on the origin of chapters 1 to 39. (3) The contexts of both 3. 26 and 24. 27 show that Ezekiel's silence was temporary; whenever Yahweh wanted him to speak he could and did open his mouth. (4) The reference to the book in 2. 9ff. is nothing more than a vivid description of the prophet's inspiration; it may, indeed, prove that Ezekiel knew written prophecies, but warrants no conclusion as to the origin of his own book. But not only are the arguments discussed inconclusive; a close study of the book reveals several specific statements to the effect that Ezekiel was a speaking prophet.[31]

Most scholars who believe that spoken discourses form the basis of the present book of Ezekiel credit the collection and arrangement of the individual prophecies to Ezekiel himself.[32] But among those who look upon Ezekiel as the collector two distinct views may be discovered: (1) Smend, followed by several more recent writers, argued strongly in favor of the view that the

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[30] Surely, there is no ground for believing that Ezekiel dispatched letters containing these prophecies either to Jerusalem or to the foreign nations named.

[31] 2. 4ff.; 3. 27; 11. 25; 20. 1ff.; 33. 30ff. One is hardly justified in regarding these passages as intentional or unintentional misrepresentations.

[32] Some scholars who doubt the presence of spoken discourses nevertheless trace the book to Ezekiel. Kuenen, for instance, insists that there are no good reasons for assuming that the book was written by some one else.

book is not a compilation of material preserved by the prophet from different periods of his prophetic ministry, but an original work composed and written toward the close of Ezekiel's career;[33] which means, that the prophecies threatening the fall of Jerusalem were written long after the city had fallen and in the light of that experience as a fact of history. In support of his contention Smend directed attention to the artistic arrangement of the book, the general balance of part with part, the numerous parables and figures which, as he thought, presented conclusive evidence of literary elaboration; he expressed serious doubt that prophecies dealing with so many different subjects and delivered on numerous occasions throughout a long period of time could have been brought together to form a smooth, symmetrical, and harmonious whole.[34] (2) The opinion held by most scholars is expressed in concise form in the following words of G. B. Gray: "Are we, then, to assume that 1 to 7 is a section written by Ezekiel in 592-591, 8 to 19 another written in 591-590, and so on, and that toward the end of his life he simply put together these various notebooks? The general uniformity of style and the careful arrangement of the book and its very real unity are most unfavorable to such a theory. It is more reasonable to suppose that Ezekiel had some record of his teaching at specific times in his career, that the various sections substantially reproduce that teaching, but that the entire book was planned and written after 572, and, indeed, after 570, unless we prefer to suppose that the prophet's correction[35] in 570 of what he had said erroneously in 586[36] was

[33] He believes that 40. 1 suggests a probable date.

[34] *Der Prophet Ezekiel Erklaert*, pp. xxi, xxii.

[35] Ezek. 29. 17-24. [36] 26. 12.

inserted by himself in a work which he had completed as early as 572. While the various sections of the book substantially and generally reproduce the teaching of Ezekiel at the dates specified, occasional exceptions to this rule certainly seem to occur, and these, too, are most naturally explained if we assume a free construction of the book on the basis of some definite records, at the close of Ezekiel's career. Such an exception is the allusion to Zedekiah's breach of faith with Nebuchadnezzar,[37] which took place after 591, the date assigned to 8 to 19."[38] Whether Ezekiel wrote the entire book in its present form or not, there is insufficient reason for doubting the fact that the prophet made a collection or collections of at least some of the prophecies previously delivered orally and composed in written form the constitution for the restored community now found in chapters 40 to 48.

A few recent writers claim to have discovered in Ezekiel, as in other prophetic writings, evidence of editorial activity, which has convinced them that the book in its present form is not the work of Ezekiel but of a later redactor:[39] (1) In opposition to the claim that arrangement, unity, and proper disposition of material point to Ezekiel as the author, it is pointed out that these characteristics do not justify such conclusion nor exclude the activity of a redactor. (2) Attention is called to the Jewish tradition embodied in the Babylonian Talmud

[37] 17. 15-18.

[38] *Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 201. The closing statement is based on the erroneous assumption that the date given in 8. 1 fixes the dates of all the prophecies in chapters 8 to 19 (see above, p. 326). Cornill, Bertholet, and, indeed, most scholars agree with the general position of Gray.

[39] For instance, Herrmann, Kraetzschmar, Steuernagel.

that the "men of the Great Synagogue" wrote the book of Ezekiel[40] and to the statement of Josephus that Ezekiel wrote two books;[41] which is thought to imply the existence of two recensions which, it is further thought, were subsequently brought together to form the present book.[42] (3) The use of two different recensions in the production of the present book is inferred also from the presence of alleged repetitions and discrepancies.[43] It is further argued that granting the claim that the present book is the result of a combination of two recensions, the activity of a redactor must be assumed, for it is not probable that the two recensions originated early enough to enable Ezekiel to make the combination.[44] (4) Kraetzschmar

[40] *Baba bathra*, 14b. Compare F. C. Eiselen, *The Books of the Pentateuch*, p. 86. Since the statement cannot be interpreted as referring to the composition of the book, it is interpreted as implying a late revision of a rather radical nature.

[41] *Antiquities*, x, 5. 1.

[42] It must be admitted that no satisfactory explanation of Josephus' statement has as yet been found. There is no support for the assumption that the reference is to Jeremiah, and that the two books alluded to are Jeremiah and Lamentations. Nor is it probable that Josephus thinks of two parts of Ezekiel—chapters 1 to 24, a book of doom; chapters 25 to 48, a book of promise—or that at one time chapters 25 to 32 or 40 to 48 circulated as an independent work. No apocryphal book which Josephus might have had in mind is known.

[43] In some passages, for instance chapter 7, repetitions are so apparent that several scholars—Hitzig, DeLagarde, Cornill, Bertholet—have suspected the introduction of material from a second source, but Kraetzschmar has gone far beyond earlier writers in the discovery of repetitions and discrepancies (*Ezechiel*, p. xiii). He assumes two recensions, a longer and a shorter. In the former Ezekiel speaks in the first person; from it the shorter recension was made, in which the prophet is referred to in the third person.

[44] Some scholars, while recognizing the facts to which Kraetzschmar calls attention, hesitate to accept the explanation offered by him. Thus, Budde suggests that the book written by Ezekiel practically in its present form circulated in several recensions, which gradually came

calls attention to several other characteristics which, he thinks, receive a more natural explanation on the assumption that some one other than Ezekiel is responsible for the book in its present form.[45]

In the discussion of the question of different recensions special attention has been given to the prophecy concerning Gog in chapters 38, 39 and the ecclesiastical constitution in chapters 40 to 48. Kraetzschmar recognizes in 38, 39 two originally independent prophecies, the first in 38. 3-9, 16b, 17; 39. 1-8, the second, in 38. 10-16a, 18-23; 39. 9-20. This conclusion is accepted by Gressmann, who, however, goes beyond Kraetzschmar in considering the whole of the two chapters later than Ezekiel.[46] Herrmann believes that underlying the two chapters is a genuine prophecy of Ezekiel directed against Babylon[47] and based to some extent on mythological material. This nucleus, he thinks, was subsequently worked over by a redactor, who introduced the characteristically

to differ in details, and that subsequently all these recensions underwent a uniform revision (*Geschichte der Hebraeischen Litteratur*, pp. 154, 155). Herrmann, who, in his *Ezechielstudien*, subjected the book to the most searching criticism, admits that the book suffered later alterations, but some of the phenomena which Kraetzschmar is inclined to credit to redactors he traces to the fact that Ezekiel did not write the book at one time but built it up gradually out of smaller units, and that he continued the work of revision and correction for a long period of time.

[45] For instance, the corruption of the text in the opening verses; the abrupt close of the narrative in 3. 15 and 10. 7; the expansion of the inaugural vision in 3. 16b to 21; the lack of orderly arrangement in chapters 4, 5, 44 to 46; the unexplained repetitions in the account of the vision of the cherubim and the divine glory in chapter 10; the interpolation of 11. 1-13 and 14-21 in the vision of the temple in chapters 8 to 11; the omission of the date in 37. 1; the lack of order in chapters 38, 39.

[46] *Eschatologie*, pp. 180ff.

[47] No prophecy against Babylon is found in the list of prophecies against foreign nations in chapters 25 to 32.

eschatological elements in 38. 5, 6, 8, 14-16, 17-23; 39. 5, 16. Sellin, on the whole, agrees with Herrmann, but traces some of the elements which the latter credits to a later redactor to the mythological basis of Ezekiel's prophecy.[48] To the present writer it seems that the two chapters contain a genuine prophecy of Ezekiel, which later underwent editorial revision in certain details.

Contrary to the commonly accepted theory of the unity of chapters 40 to 48, Herrmann has suggested that these nine chapters contain more or less extensive interpolations; he questions, for instance, 43. 13-27; 44. 20-31; 45. 11-15; 46. 11, 13-15; 47. 13 to 48. 34. That the text of these chapters is in disorder and that certain alterations in Ezekiel's original program were made for the purpose of harmonizing Ezekiel's scheme with the legislation of the Pentateuch is very probable; on the other hand, it seems a difficult, if not impossible task, to separate the original material from the later alterations and expansions. In general, it may be stated that while there are evidences of editorial activity in the book of Ezekiel, redactors played a much less prominent role here than in other prophetic books.

To sum up this entire discussion—the following stages in the history of the book of Ezekiel may be recognized: (1) The prophetic activity of Ezekiel, during which he delivered, among the exiles in Babylonia, discourses the substance of which is preserved in chapters 1 to 39, and formulated in writing the constitution of the restored community embodied in chapters 40 to 48. The practice of summarizing spoken discourses in brief poems, which was adopted by some of the earlier prophets, was not followed to any marked extent by Ezekiel. There are,

[48] *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 84.

indeed, a few poetic passages,[49] but by far the greater part of the book is in prose. The prose summaries of the longer discourses may, in most cases, be traced to the prophet himself. (2) Toward the close of the prophet's life he collected the individual discourses or summaries and notes of discourses into what may be called a book of Ezekiel.[50] The exact form of this first edition cannot be determined; probably it did not differ materially from the book in its present form. (3) In the course of time two or more recensions, differing in many details as the result of liberties taken by readers and copyists, came into use.[51] (4) The circulation of two or more divergent

[49] For instance, the elegies in chapter 19; 26. 17; 27. 3ff., 32-36.

[50] The preparation of such a collection by Ezekiel himself is suggested by the presence of corrections, and more or less extensive revisions of earlier prophecies, which bear the impress of the prophet's own personality. For instance, 12. 16 and 14. 21-23 state and, at the same time justify, exceptions to the general teaching of earlier prophecies; 29. 17-21 is in the nature of a revision of the earlier, unfulfilled prophecies against Tyre recorded in chapter 28; 21. 28-32 is intended to prevent an erroneous inference from verses 18-23. These are by no means the only corrections or revisions that may be traced to Ezekiel; but some of them are so minute that only a detailed exegetical study can lead to their discovery. From 29. 17, which furnishes the date of one of these corrections, it may, perhaps, be safe to infer that toward the close of his activity Ezekiel reviewed his earlier prophecies with a view of bringing them together in a single collection and that in reading the material written down earlier he realized the desirability of making some minor changes and corrections; the resulting additions and modifications may even now be separated from the original utterances.

[51] The principal evidence pointing to the existence, back of the present book, of at least two recensions is found in the numerous repetitions which may be discovered in the book as it appears now. Some of these repetitions do not affect the thought; for instance, 1. 1-3 reads as if it were a combination of two originally distinct headings; 3. 4-9 is a variant of 2. 1-8 and, perhaps, also of 3. 10, 11; 6. 4b of 6. 5a; 7. 3, 4 of 7. 6-9; 13. 11, 12 of 13. 13-16; 14. 4, 5 of 14. 6-8; 17. 8, 9 of 17. 10; 17. 16-18 of 17. 19; 18. 21-25 of 18. 26-29; 22. 19 of 22. 20, 21; 23. 25-27 of 23. 28-30;

recensions, even though the differences may not have been very significant, proved highly unsatisfactory; consequently, the varying recensions were brought together, compared, and in so far as seemed wise and necessary united to form the present book of Ezekiel.[52] The date of this redactional activity cannot be fixed; in all probability it took place at a relatively early date, for (1) it was completed before the Septuagint translation was made in the closing years of the third or the early part of the second century B. C.; (2) it was made at a time when the Priestly Code was still in use as an independent document,[53] which would point to a date near 450 B. C. The place may have been Babylon, where Ezekiel labored and produced the first edition of the book.

2. Life and Times

Condition of the Exiles. The destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. marked the close of the national life of the Hebrews. Judah, like the northern kingdom,[54] went to

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25. 3-5 of 25. 6, 7; 30. 22-24a of 30. 24b-26; 35. 3b-6 of 35. 7-11; 36. 10 of 36. 11, 12; 37. 12, 13a of 37. 13b, 14. Others are more significant, for they extend to ideas as well as to language; compare, for instance, the vision of the four living beings in chapter 1 with the vision in chapter 10; in 8. 1-4 two narratives of the carrying of Ezekiel to Jerusalem seem to be combined: according to one, Yahweh seized him, according to the other, the Spirit; 8. 7 represents the hole as already in the wall, in 8. 8 the prophet is instructed to dig it; etc. For a much longer list see Steuernagel, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, pp. 596, 597; Kraetzschmar, *Ezechiel*, p. xiii and *passim*.

[52] It has been suggested that the work was done under official auspices and that it included a complete working over of the text. The first part of this suggestion is probably correct; for the second part there is no sufficient evidence.

[53] Ezek. 43. 18-27; 45. 1-8a, 18-20, 21-25; 46. 1-12, 13-15; 47. 13 to 48. 35 reveal the influence of the Priestly Code.

[54] 2 Kings 17. 7-23.

its doom in accordance with eternal laws that operate in the lives of all nations: Religious, social, and moral corruption caused national disintegration and ruin.[55] In the case of Judah selfish and inefficient rulers hastened the process by the pursuit of a weak and vacillating policy that called forth the destructive wrath of the Chaldeans.[56] But there was a difference between the downfall of Israel and that of Judah. Those who were carried into exile from the northern kingdom were soon swallowed up by their neighbors, and never again played an important part in the religious history of the world.[57] This was due to the fact that in Israel religion had not advanced beyond the national stage; so that, when the nation was destroyed, religion, closely bound to the national institutions, could not maintain itself, except, perhaps, in the lives of a few individuals, who were not numerous enough to save it. In Judah the situation was different. Jeremiah, even before the dissolution of the national life, denationalized, individualized, and spiritualized religion,[58] and many came to see that they might continue as worshipers of Yahweh no matter what became of the external religious institutions.[59] These faithful ones were not found in any considerable numbers among

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[55] For a description of the conditions in Judah during the decades preceding the fall of Jerusalem, see vol. I, pp. 302-305.

[56] See vol. I, pp. 299, 300.

[57] The people who remained behind did not retain a pure Yahweh religion (2 Kings 17. 24-41); their descendants appear in later history as the Samaritans.

[58] See vol. I, pp. 313, 314.

[59] Undoubtedly, when the final crisis came, many failed to endure and went the way of their brothers in the north; nevertheless, a sufficient number of Jews made the religion of Jeremiah their own, which made possible the survival of Yahweh religion.

those who were left behind in Judah,[60] nor among the fugitives who fled to Egypt,[61] but they were well represented in the groups of Jewish captives that were carried to Babylonia by Nebuchadrezzar in 597 and 586 B. C. Upon these exiles depended the future of the Jewish race and of the Jewish religion.

The condition of the exiles in Babylonia was fairly comfortable. They appear to have been free in all respects except choice of residence. Sections of land were assigned to them, where they had the opportunity to acquire property and even to amass wealth. Many heeded the advice of Jeremiah,[62] identified themselves with the interests of their masters, and lived settled lives in peaceful industry and family happiness. The Jews were granted permission to form settlements under their own elders, who organized the new communities after the pattern of Palestinian towns. Religious as well as civil liberty was granted, so that in its general aspects life in Babylonia may have differed but little from that in the small towns of Judah before the fall of the state.

The exiles were by no means all faithful and ardent worshipers of Yahweh; indeed, religious and moral conditions may have continued for some time as they were before the exile. True, both Jeremiah and Ezekiel consider the exiles better than the Jews left behind, and they see in the former the nucleus of the Messianic king-

[60] This does not mean that the new emphasis in religion failed entirely in Judah; no doubt there were many who remained loyal; and while it is too much to credit them exclusively with the rebuilding of the temple (F. C. Eiselen, *The Psalms and Other Sacred Writings*, pp. 304-308), no doubt these faithful Yahweh worshipers were enthusiastic participants in the enterprise.

[61] See vol. I, p. 300.

[62] Jer. 29. 5-7.

dom; nevertheless, the conditions which confronted Jeremiah in Jerusalem were essentially the same as those which troubled Ezekiel in exile. Many of the captives conformed to Babylonian customs and forgot Jerusalem. Idolatry and superstition were widespread; while some seemed to think that idolatry was perfectly compatible with a nominal allegiance to Yahweh.[63] During the years preceding the fall of Jerusalem false prophets had appeared among the exiles prophesying "smooth things" and promising a speedy restoration,[64] and had succeeded in persuading many to oppose the earnest and severe message of Ezekiel.[65] The sense of personal responsibility, which Jeremiah had sought to create, was but slightly felt by the great majority in exile. Many were the complaints that they had to bear the sins of their ancestors.[66] And yet, there were in exile many men of piety and zeal, who retained their faith in Yahweh; yea, whose faith was purified and intensified by the experiences of the exile.[67] They were ready to follow any great personality who might attempt to lead them to higher and diviner things. Among these choice spirits Ezekiel found a congenial sphere of activity. Earlier prophets had foretold the captivity, which had now become a reality. They had also foretold the salvation and restoration of a remnant; and it was this prediction that now sustained the pious exiles, whose faith in Yahweh and in his prophets had been strengthened by the fulfillment of the first part of their message. Ezekiel's

[63] Ezek. 14. 1ff.; 20. 1ff.
[64] Jer. 29. 8ff.
[65] Ezek. 2. 3ff.; 3. 4ff.
[66] Ezek. 18. 2, 25; 33. 10, 17, 20; 37. 11.
[67] This attitude finds expression in Psa. 137.

glowing words kept alive this hope, and at the same time urged the people into a more vital relation with their God, such as Jeremiah had emphasized, and as individuals here and there had enjoyed even before the exile. Self-examination and contrition for the past helped the exiles to realize with ever-increasing clearness and force that true religion did not depend upon the existence of the state, or the sacred city, or even the Temple, but upon the relation of the individual to his God. For the history of Judaism and of religion in general the Babylonian exile was of the greatest significance.

Personal Life of Ezekiel. Ezekiel, the son of Buzi,[68] was a priest.[69] As such he belonged to the aristocracy of Jerusalem, that was carried into exile in 597 B. C.[70] Little or nothing is known of his earlier life. His familiarity with the priestly ritual may suggest that he was old enough when he left Jerusalem to have officiated for some time in the national sanctuary.[71] The authority with which he speaks and the deference shown him by his fellow exiles suggest that he was no longer in his first youth when he assumed the prophetic office. He may well have been acquainted with Jeremiah; indeed, the numerous points of contact[72] between the

[68] Nothing is known of Buzi or his family.

[69] Ezek. 1. 3.

[70] 2 Kings 24 14-16.

[71] If "thirty" in 1. 1 refers to the age of the prophet, as suggested by Kraetzschmar and Budde, the above inference is not warranted, but it is by no means certain that the reference is to the thirtieth year of Ezekiel. It must be admitted, however, that thus far no satisfactory explanation of the number has been found.

[72] Compare, for instance, Ezek. 3. 8, 9 with Jer. 1. 8, 17, 18; 15. 20; Ezek. 3. 14 with Jer. 6. 11; 15. 17; Ezek. 3. 26; 24. 15-27 with Jer. 16. 5ff.; Ezek. 2. 3, 5; chapters 16 and 20 with Jer. 7. 25; Ezek. 16. 47, 51;

two prophets would seem to indicate that he was a disciple of the older man, or at least that the latter's teaching had made a profound impression on him. "In his character and work these two currents of influence—the priestly and prophetical—constantly appear and their harmonious blending is one of the great sources of his power." He at least knew of the reform administration of Josiah, and he lived through the reactionary reign of Jehoiakim. When he entered the prophetic office conditions among his fellow exiles must have been bad; at any rate, he calls his countrymen—whether in Jerusalem or in Babylonia—"rebellious, . . . impudent, . . . stiff-hearted, . . . briers, . . . thorns, . . . scorpions."[73]

In Babylonia he was settled in a community of exiles at Tel-Abib by the river Chebar.[74] There he lived, with his wife,[75] in his own house,[76] where in later years the elders came to consult him.[77] The prophetic call came to him in the fifth year of his exile.[78] Ezekiel's own account of the spiritual crisis which constituted this call[79] reveals the two-fold dynamic which prompted him throughout his entire ministry: (1) the vision of the majesty, glory, and holiness of Yahweh; (2) the realiza-

23. 11 with Jer. 3. 11; 16. 12; Ezek. 5. 6; 16. 38 with Jer. 2. 11. Ezek. 22. 30 with Jer. 5. 1; etc. See further, H. A. Redpath, *Ezekiel*, pp. xxiv, xxv.

[73] Chapters 2 and 3.

[74] Ezek. 3. 15. Perhaps, better, Tel-Abub; the former is thought to mean "hill of an ear of corn," the latter means, "hill produced by the action of storms."

[75] Ezek. 24. 18.

[76] 3. 24.

[77] 8. 1.

[78] 1. 2; see note 14, above, p. 325.

[79] 1. 4ff.

tion of the startling contrast between the character of his countrymen and the divine ideal for them. Henceforth, his sole ambition was to persuade the house of Israel to realize this divine ideal.

During the years between his call and 586 B. C., when Jerusalem fell, Ezekiel devoted himself almost exclusively to combating the false hopes of a speedy restoration entertained by many both in Jerusalem and in exile. His message during this period, which was largely one of denunciation and threat, was received no more kindly than was that of Jeremiah.[80] Toward the close of this period, near the beginning of the last siege of Jerusalem, the prophet's wife died;[81] which bereavement marked the close of Ezekiel's earlier ministry. While the siege was in progress he refrained from speaking,[82] but he spoke again when the news of the fall of the city reached him.[83] When his predictions of the fall of Jerusalem were fulfilled in 586 B. C. a change came over the people; henceforth they regarded him with much greater respect and confidence. His message also assumed a different aspect, for he now dwelt more and more on the coming restoration. According to the dates given in the book, this period of activity was short, and was succeeded by many years of silence.[84] As time went on his conviction of an early restoration became ever more firmly fixed, and finally he formulated a complete, detailed scheme for the establishment of an ecclesiastical

[80] 3. 25; see vol. I, pp. 305, 306.

[81] 24. 16-18.

[82] 24. 27.

[83] 33. 22. During the period of silence he is said to have written prophecies concerning Egypt; 29. 1; 30. 20; 31. 1.

[84] No date is given between the twelfth and the twenty-fifth year; see 32. 17 and 40. 1.

community upon Palestinian soil, in which the will of Yahweh would be recognized as supreme law.[85]

Ezekiel's Methods of Teaching and Work. Changes in environment compelled Ezekiel to find new methods of carrying out the prophetic commission. Even during the years preceding the fall of Jerusalem he could not address himself to the nation in the way in which his predecessors had done, for he and his listeners were removed from the old center of the national and religious life. Inevitably the individual assumed an importance undreamed of before. Hitherto public discourse had been the principal means of prophetic instruction; Ezekiel continued to use it to some extent; but in exile it was impossible to collect the crowds which could easily be gathered in the capital city Jerusalem. Ezekiel's dealings were with individuals and small groups; he became preeminently a pastor, giving a shepherd's care to those who came under his immediate charge. He frequently designates himself a watchman, appointed by God to give warning to the house of Israel.[86] His fellow exiles seem to have recognized this pastoral relationship, for they freely came to consult him, either in person or through their elders.[87]

The variety of methods employed by Ezekiel for the purpose of impressing his message upon his countrymen is remarkable. Sometimes he adopted the method of public address.[88] Frequently deputations of Jews came to his house and sat before him;[89] which may imply that

[85] Chapters 40 to 48.

[86] For instance, 3. 17; 33. 1-9.

[87] 14. 1; 33. 30.

[88] 6. 11, "Smite with thy hand, and stamp with thy foot," may refer to gestures as means of making the message more impressive.

[89] 14. 1.

the interviews and discussions continued for some time. At other times he may have put his message in the form of pastoral letters.[90] The prophet shows great fondness for parables and allegories as means of instruction; and the book abounds in references to visions and symbolical actions. There seems insufficient reason for questioning the reality of all the visions recorded.[91] The prophet evidently was of a highly emotional and imaginative temperament, which may have made him exceptionally susceptible to vision or trance experiences.[92] Certainly, when he put the account of these experiences in writing he may have elaborated them; and it is by no means improbable that in some instances he used the vision simply as a literary device for the purpose of making his message more vivid. Similarly, some of the symbolical acts recorded were undoubtedly performed by the prophet; on the other hand, there are some references to symbolical actions that are more naturally explained in harmony with the suggestion of A. B. Davidson: "They were imagined merely. They passed through the prophet's mind. He lived in this ideal sphere; he went through the actions in his fantasy, and they appeared to him to carry the same effects as if they had been performed."[93]

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[90] This would explain the formal character of some of Ezekiel's prophecies; indeed, all of Ezekiel's prophecies "bear evidence of long meditation and careful elaboration. . . . He dwells upon his subject, and expands and develops his thought, in contrast to the terse, sharp utterances of the older prophets. Not content with an outline, he fills in the details of the picture, sometimes to the detriment of its distinctness."

[91] A view commonly held by earlier scholars; for instance, Keil, Hengstenberg, Haevernick, Bleek, Hitzig, Smend, Kuenen, Toy, etc.

[92] It has been suggested that he was subject to epileptic fits.

[93] *Ezekiel*, p. xxx.

3. Teaching and Significance

The activity and teaching of Ezekiel were of tremendous importance to his own day and generation, and their influence continued to be felt throughout many succeeding generations of Jewish history. "If the remnant of Israel was not lost among the nations after the destructive catastrophe of 587-586, but found the way in which its future lay, this is really due to the service rendered by Ezekiel. In a wonderful manner he suited his activity to the changed conditions."[94] The more important elements in his teaching are:

Denunciation of Sin and Announcement of Doom. (1) From the time of his call to the destruction of Jerusalem he devoted his energies almost exclusively to the denunciation of Judah's sins and the announcement of impending ruin.[95] His task was made more difficult by certain prophets who promised speedy deliverance from the Chaldeans. (2) In his view of the origin of the nation's sinfulness Ezekiel differs from the earlier prophets. Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah taught that Israel was pure in the beginning and did not apostatize from Yahweh until after the exodus from Egypt. Ezekiel, on the other hand, traces the rebellion of Israel back to Egypt.[96] Even then the people deserved the divine wrath, and Yahweh brought them out of bondage only in order that his name might not be profaned among the nations.[97]

Promises of Restoration. Ezekiel was not exclusively a messenger of doom. Denunciation might lead the

[94] Kraetzschmar, *Ezechiel*, p. vii.

[95] Chapters 1 to 24.

[96] 20. 8; 23. 3.

[97] 20. 9.

people to see their own wretchedness and fill them with remorse for wrongdoing, but that in itself would not produce a change of life and character. When the prophet discovered that the people's conscience had been touched[98] and that they were ready for a message of hope and encouragement, he sought to sustain the despairing exiles with the promise of the ultimate restoration of the divine favor to all who would truly seek Yahweh. Even in the first division of the book, which embodies the denunciations uttered during the years preceding the fall of Jerusalem, a few bright promises may be found;[99] but it is especially in the utterances originating after 586 B. C. that Ezekiel gives expression to his sublime hopes for the future.

The following elements enter into the prophet's vision of the restoration: (1) Ezekiel, like Hosea, was firmly convinced that heartfelt repentance was a fundamental condition of the restoration of the divine favor.[100] (2) The restoration will be preceded by the destruction of the foreign nations.[101] (3) The land of Israel, now in the possession of foreigners,[102] will be prepared for the reception of the exiles, on the one hand, by the expulsion

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[98] 33. 10; 37. 11.

[99] 11. 16ff.; 16. 60ff.; 17. 22-24; 20. 40ff.; etc.

[100] 18. 30-32.

[101] Chapters 25 to 32, 38, 39. See also above, pp. 320, 321. "These judgments," says Davidson, "will awaken the nations to the knowledge who the God of Israel is—they shall know that he is Jehovah; and they will insure that in the future his people shall not be troubled or led astray" (*Ezekiel*, p. 195). Similarly Skinner: "The motive of the judgments announced is to prepare the way for the restoration of Israel, by removing the evil influences which had sprung from the people's contact with its heathen neighbors in the past (28. 24-26; 29. 16)" (Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Ezekiel").

[102] 36. 2.

of the present occupants,[103] on the other, by its endowment with extraordinary fertility.[104] (4) The exiles will be prepared for the return to the promised land by a moral and spiritual regeneration.[105] (5) The preparation completed, the exiles will be restored to the promised land, there to live forever in prosperity and in the fear of Yahweh.[106] Then the mountains of Israel will swarm with people, the cities will be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt.[107] The northern kingdom will share in the blessings of restoration, and north and south will be reunited.[108] (6) In the new era Israel will no more suffer, as in the past, from faithless rulers,[109] for Yahweh himself will be the shepherd of his flock;[110] as his earthly representative he will appoint a descendant of David to rule over the united Israel and Judah.[111] (7) The regenerated and restored nation will live in close fellowship with Yahweh forever. The sins of Jerusalem compelled him to leave the Temple and the city and give them up to destruction;[112] in the age of restoration the sanctuary will be rebuilt, Yahweh will reenter it and establish an eternal covenant of peace with his people.[113] (8) Ezekiel was not content with predicting the restoration and the changes accompanying it;

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[103] 36. 3-7.

[104] 36. 8, 9, 29, 30, 34, 35.

[105] 36. 25-27.

[106] In 37. 1-14 the restoration is likened to a resurrection from the dead; compare also 36. 8ff.

[107] 36. 10.

[108] 37. 15ff.

[109] 34. 16.

[110] 34. 11-22.

[111] 34. 23, 24; 37. 22ff.

[112] Chapters 10, 11.

[113] 37. 26, 27; compare 43. 1-12.

he put his convictions and ideals into concrete form in chapters 40 to 48. After all, the efforts of the earlier prophets had failed to bring about the moral and spiritual transformation upon which they insisted. Ezekiel saw the cause of the failure in the inability of the people to grasp the teaching of the prophets and apply it to the daily life. He sought to obviate this difficulty and to secure purity and righteousness in the life of the individual and the community by mapping out a scheme for the establishment of an absolute theocracy in the promised land. "The unique significance of that remarkable creation lies in the fact that under the form of a Messianic prophecy it presents the scheme of a politico-religious constitution, in which the fundamental idea of holiness is applied to the regulation of every part of the national life. It is a picture of the kingdom of God in its final and perfect state as this prophet was led to conceive it."[114] The underlying idea was the holiness of Yahweh and the conviction that only as this holiness was reflected in the life of the people did real and permanent fellowship between Yahweh and Israel become possible.

Fundamental Ideas underlying Ezekiel's Teaching. Many of the truths taught by Ezekiel are identical with those proclaimed by earlier prophets, but there are other truths, or some aspects of truth, that are peculiar to him or receive special emphasis from him: (1) Fundamental in Ezekiel's thought of Yahweh is what he calls "the glory" of Yahweh. The idea expressed in this phrase is similar to that suggested by the song of the Seraphim in Isaiah's inaugural vision,[115] "The whole earth is full of

[114] J. Skinner, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Ezekiel."
[115] Isa. 6. 3.

his glory"; that is, evidences of the glorious manifestations of Yahweh in nature and history may be seen on every hand.[116] In other words, throughout the prophecy the phrase suggests the glorious majesty and power, the universal supremacy, of the God of Israel, which he desires to manifest continually in his dealings with men.[117] (2) Similar in meaning is the phrase "the name of Yahweh." The glory of Yahweh denotes the glorious manifestations of Yahweh, especially in history; the name of Yahweh is the side of his nature and character that can be revealed to man, or the sum of his attributes as he has revealed them. According to Ezekiel, all the dealings of Yahweh with Israel are for his name's sake; that is, for the purpose of revealing his true nature and character.[118] (3) In several passages Ezekiel states that by a certain act Yahweh will "sanctify himself" or "show himself holy." With Ezekiel, as with Isaiah,[119] the holiness of Yahweh denotes, not so much a particular attribute, as his whole essential Godhead, though the

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[116] The glory of Yahweh is described especially in the visions recorded in chapters 1, 10, 43.

[117] The divine glory was so overpowering that at the sight of it the prophet fell upon his face (1. 28; 3. 23), and this he considers the proper attitude in the presence of Yahweh.

[118] The Israelites rebelled against Yahweh in Egypt; nevertheless, for his name's sake, he brought them out of the land of bondage (20. 8, 9; compare verses 14, 22). Had he left them to destruction, his name would have been profaned among the nations; for to them any disaster that befell his people would have been an indication of his weakness and inability to protect them, and this misconception might have led them to mock him. To prevent this, he delivered Israel, though the people deserved otherwise. In the same way the restoration in the future will not be due to any merit on the part of the exiles, but again to the desire of Yahweh to make himself known in his true nature and character to Israel and to the nations (36. 22, 23).

[119] See vol. I, p. 200.

prophet never loses sight of the moral aspect of the divine holiness. "Holy as applied to Yahweh is an expression that in some way describes him as God, either generally or on any particular side of his nature, the manifestation or thought of which impresses men with the sense of his Godhead."[120] Consequently, the statement that Yahweh will sanctify himself or show himself holy means that he will show himself to be the true God. The actions of his people and his dealings with them in the past may have left some doubts on this point in the minds of outside nations, but his future treatment of Israel and of the nations will open the eyes of the latter and convince them that he alone is God.[121] (4) Ezekiel emphasizes and expands Jeremiah's doctrine of moral freedom and individual responsibility. There were, as in the days of Jeremiah, those who complained that they were suffering for the sins of their fathers.[122] This is not true, says Ezekiel.[123] The prophet makes it equally clear that a person does not lie under the ban of his own previous life.[124] (5) Perhaps in nothing is the contrast between Ezekiel and the earlier prophets more clearly marked than in his attitude toward the forms and institutions of religion. The earlier prophets insist that forms and institutions are not essential elements of Yahweh religion;[125] Ezekiel, on the other hand, gives much

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[120] Compare A. B. Davidson, *Ezekiel*, pp. xli-xliii.

[121] 20. 41; 28. 22, 25; 36. 23; 38. 16, 23.

[122] 18. 2, 19.

[123] 18. 20.

[124] 18. 21-32. The doctrine of freedom and responsibility taught by Ezekiel was so artificial and mechanical that later generations were seriously disturbed by it.

[125] Amos 5. 21-25; Hos. 6. 6; Isa. 1. 11-15; Mic. 6. 6-8; Jer. 3. 16, 17; 7. 21, 22.

attention to the ecclesiastical organization of the post-exilic community, and in the constitution provided by him much stress is laid upon many things which earlier prophets considered of little or no consequence. This emphasis on externals of religion is responsible for the charge that Ezekiel "transformed the ideals of the prophets into laws and dogmas, and destroyed spiritually free and moral religion."[126] This sweeping charge is not warranted. In the first place, Ezekiel had good reason for believing that his age needed the expression of religious ideals in concrete, external forms. The great mass of people needed the Temple, the sacrificial system, and other institutions as means of communion with God; it is, indeed, exceedingly doubtful that the religion of Yahweh could have survived without them.[127] In the second place, the ritual does by no means exhaust the religious interests of the prophet. Again and again he insists that a pure and righteous life constitutes an essential part of true religion.[128] Besides, the provisions in chapters 40 to 48 are intended for a regenerated people; they are meant to aid a regenerated community to give proper expression to its devotion to Yahweh. Consequently, "in interpreting the mind of the man who sketched this priestly legislation it is unfair to ignore those profound and noble utterances touching the necessity of the new heart[129] and the new spirit,[130] utterances which have the ring of some of the greatest words of Jeremiah."

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[126] B. Duhm, *Theologie der Propheten*, p. 263.

[127] That later generations exaggerated the importance of externals until finally the spirit was almost entirely lost sight of was not the fault of Ezekiel.

[128] Chapters 3, 18, 33.

[129] 18. 31; 36. 26.

[130] 11. 19.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

THE fourth division of the second volume of the prophets is known as THE TWELVE; that is, a collection of twelve writings bearing twelve different names. The twelve books are commonly referred to as the *Minor Prophets,* in distinction from the five preceding books, known as the *Major Prophets.*[1] The fact that the material is distributed among twelve men whose names are given does not exclude the possibility of anonymous utterances having been included.[2]

The date when the collection of Minor Prophets was formed cannot be determined. The entire prophetic canon was in existence not far from 200 B. C.,[3] which means, that the book of the Twelve was collected at a still earlier date; though, perhaps, not much earlier, since the book of Jonah, which formed a part of the collection from the beginning, was written in the third century B. C.[4] In arranging the books the collectors followed, in general, what they conceived to be the chronological order.[5] Hosea, Amos, Micah were active in the eighth century; Jonah, the alleged author of the book bearing that name, was identified with the prophet Jonah mentioned in 2 Kings 14. 25 as the contemporary of Jeroboam II, king

[1] See vol. I, p. 107.

[2] See below, especially p. 581, and pp. 591, 592.

[3] See vol. I, p. 111.

[4] See below, p. 467.

[5] In the Septuagint the order of the first six books is: Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah; the order of the remaining books is the same as in Hebrew.

of Israel in the eighth century B. C.; Obadiah may have been placed between Amos and Jonah because the collectors regarded the little book an expansion of the brief threat against Edom in Amos 9. 12, and because they saw in Jonah an illustration of Obad. 1, "an ambassador is sent among the nations." Why Joel was connected with the books named is less clear; but evidently it too was accepted as an early production.[6] The first six books in the collection, therefore, seem to have been assigned to the eighth century B. C., one or two of them perhaps even to an earlier date; the next three, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, to the seventh century; Haggai and Zechariah to the sixth century, and Malachi to the fifth century.

Internal evidence shows that the dates assigned to the several books by the collectors cannot in all cases be accepted. As will be pointed out in the detailed discussion of the separate books, the chronological order of the so-called Minor Prophets is as follows: Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah —chapters 1 to 8—Malachi, Obadiah, Joel, Zechariah—chapters 9 to 14—Jonah.[7]

1. The Book of Hosea

Name. The author is called "Hosea, the son of Beeri."[8] The Hebrew name הוֹשֵׁעַ, *Hōshēa,*[9] means "salvation"; it is identical with one form of the name

[6] Joel has been considered one of the earliest books even by some modern scholars. A. F. Kirkpatrick, for instance, dates both Obadiah and Joel earlier than Amos and Hosea (*Doctrine of the Prophets*, Lectures II, III).

[7] The order followed in the present volume is that of the Hebrew Bible.

[8] 1. 1.

[9] The Septuagint form is Ὡσηέ, *Osēé*, Vulgate, *Osee.*

of the successor of Moses[10] and with that of the last king of Israel.[11]

Contents and Outline. The book of Hosea falls naturally into two divisions, chapters 1 to 3 and chapters 4 to 14. The first division sets forth the prophet's marriage and expounds the "moral of the story"—Yahweh's love and Israel's faithlessness.[12] The second division differs widely from the first and has sometimes been called the *Second Book of Hosea.* It is not possible to trace in this second division a definite plan or arrangement, though fresh beginnings may be noted in 4. 1; 5. 1; 9. 1; 11. 12; 13. 1; 14. 1. Various attempts have been made to subdivide the chapters according to the ideas emphasized in the separate sections;[13] but none of these can be called entirely successful. The prophet, from beginning to end, has in mind the hopeless condition of his people; he exhorts, laments, warns, pleads, denounces, promises—in fact, uses every possible method of persuasion—in order that he may win the people back to a pure and acceptable service of their God.

Title: Person and time of the author (1. 1).

I. Hosea's Domestic Experience an Illustration of Yahweh's Love and Israel's Faithlessness (1. 2 to 3. 5)

1. Hosea's wife and children (1. 2-9; 3. 1-3).
   (1) Marriage of Hosea and birth of Jezreel (1. 2-5).

[10] Num. 13. 8, 16; Deut. 32. 42.

[11] 2 Kings 17. 1.

[12] The story is contained in 1. 2-9; 3. 1-3, the exposition in 1. 10 to 2. 23; 3. 4, 5.

[13] Ewald, for instance, suggested three subdivisions: 4. 1 to 6. 11a, the Arraignment; 6. 11b to 9. 9, the Punishment; 9. 10 to 14. 9, Retrospect of the earlier history, exhortation and comfort. Similarly, Kirkpatrick: 4 to 8, Israel's guilt; 9. 1 to 11. 11, Israel's doom; 11. 12 to 14. 9, retrospect and prospect.

(2) Birth of Lo-ruhama (1. 6, 7).
(3) Birth of Lo-ammi (1. 8, 9).
(4) Restoration of the outcast wife (3. 1-3).

2. Interpretation of the acts and names in the story of Hosea's wife and children (1. 10 to 2. 23; 3. 4, 5).
(1) Promise of a glorious restoration (1. 10 to 2. 1).
(2) Faithlessness of Israel (2. 2-5).
(3) Evil consequences and punishment of Israel's faithlessness (2. 6-13).
(4) Disciplinary effect of the judgment, and future exaltation of Israel (2. 14-23; 3, 4, 5).
a. Restoration of Israel to intimate fellowship with Yahweh (2. 14-17).
b. Permanent peace, undisturbed by man or beast (2. 18).
c. New betrothal in righteousness (2. 19, 20).
d. Extraordinary fertility of the soil (2. 21, 22).
e. Israel's reestablishment and loyalty (2. 23).
f. Judgment and the subsequent Messianic age (3. 4, 5).

II. Hosea's Prophetic Discourses (4. 1 to 14. 8)

1. Awful condition of the people due to a lack of knowledge of Yahweh, for which lack the priests are responsible (4. 1-19).
(1) Moral corruption in every day life (4. 1-10).
a. Moral corruption of the people (4. 1-3).
b. Responsibility of the religious leaders (4. 4-8).
c. Judgment upon priests and people (4. 9, 10).
(2) Moral corruption connected with the religious cult (4. 11-19).
a. Religious corruption of the masses (4. 11-14).
b. Inevitableness of judgment (4. 15-19).

2. Utter corruption—inevitable doom (5. 1 to 8. 14).
(1) Rebuke of Israel's apostasy—the time of mercy is past (5. 1-15).
a. Rebuke of Israel's apostasy (5. 1-7).
b. Time of mercy past (5. 8-15).
(2) Israel's superficial repentance and Yahweh's reply (6. 1-11a).
a. Return of the people to Yahweh (6. 1-3).

b. Yahweh's reply: Superficial repentance not acceptable to Yahweh—the corruption is incurable (6. 4-11a).

(3) New picture of the moral degradation—resulting anarchy and destruction (6. 11b to 8. 3).

a. Divine mercy and the people's apostasy (6. 11b to 7. 2).

b. Present state of anarchy (7. 3-7).

c. Israel, blinded by her folly rushes headlong to destruction (7. 8-16a).

d. Imminence of a hostile invasion (7. 16b to 8. 3).

(4) Israel's political and religious practices an abomination to Yahweh (8. 4-14).

3. Present rejoicing contrasted with despair of the exile (9. 1-9).

4. Series of retrospects showing the utter corruption of Israel (9. 10 to 11. 11).

(1) Israel, apostate and rebellious from time immemorial, doomed to destruction (9. 10-17).

(2) Israel's guilt and punishment (10. 1-8).

(3) Israel's history—one continuous crime; Israel's destiny—death and destruction (10. 9-15).

(4) The father's love for the prodigal son (11. 1-11).

5. New series of indictments (11. 12 to 12. 14).

(1) Condemnation of Israel's faithlessness; exhortation to repentance (11. 12 to 12. 6).

(2) Israel's unholy ambition and bitter disappointment (12. 7-14).

6. Israel's glory turned to shame (13. 1-16).

(1) Israel's apostasy its own death warrant (13. 1-3).

(2) Love—ingratitude—doom (13. 4-8).

(3) Utter destruction the just punishment for Israel's guilt (13. 9-16).

7. Israel's repentance—Yahweh's pardon (14. 1-8).

(1) Israel's penitent plea (14. 1-3).

(2) Divine pardon and benediction (14. 4-8).

Epilogue—Exhortation to study the book of Hosea (14. 9).

Origin of the Book. Until very recent times the book in its present form was commonly ascribed to the prophet whose name it bears; few, if any, passages were questioned as later additions or interpolations. In the

words of Cheyne, "We cannot suppose that Hosea delivered any part of the book in its present form; it can only be a reproduction by the prophet himself of the main points of his discourses, partly imaginative, partly on the basis of notes."[14] With the advance in critical study, especially since the publication of the commentaries by Wellhausen[15] and Nowack,[16] and the more recent works of Marti[17] and Harper,[18] scholars have come to question an increasing number of passages. Harper, for instance, enumerates as the more important of the additions and glosses the following: 1. 1, 7, 9 to 2. 1; 2. 2b, 4, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18-23; 3. 5; 6. 11a, b; 7. 4; 8. 1b, 8b, 10-14; 9. 9; 10. 3, 4, 10, 14b; 11. 8b, 9a, 10b, 11, 12b; 12. 3b-6, 12, 13; 14. 1-9.[19] Marti considers as secondary (1) all the references to Judah in 1. 1, 7, 10; 4. 15; 5. 5, 10, 12, 13, 14; 6. 4, 11; 8. 14; 10. 11; 11. 12b; 12. 2a; (2) all promises of restoration, 1. 9 to 2. 1; 2. 13b-23; 3. 1-5; 5. 15 to 6. 3, 5b; 11. 10, 11; 14. 1-9. Besides, he recognizes the presence of a large number of smaller additions and glosses.[20] The lists of these two commentators indicate to what extent modern criticism denies to Hosea passages now found in the book bearing his name.

The alleged secondary elements, apart from words and sentences of minor importance, may be grouped as follows: (1) References to Judah; (2) passages picturing the glories of the future; (3) "phrases and sentences of

[14] *Hosea*, p. 19.
[15] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, 1892.
[16] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, 1897.
[17] *Das Dodekapropheton*, 1904.
[18] *Amos and Hosea*, 1905.
[19] *Amos and Hosea*, p. clx.
[20] *Das Dodekapropheton*, pp. 8-10.

a technical, archæological, or historical character, inserted by way of expansion or explanation"; (4) miscellaneous glosses and interpolations for which no special motive may be discovered.[21] Attention may be given, first of all, to the references to Judah. Marti insists that Hosea never in a single case referred to Judah;[22] Harper considers this an extreme position and admits that "in 4. 15 and 5. 5 there is nothing which demands a later origin." An exhaustive discussion of the subject would require a detailed exegetical study of each passage naming Judah, which is out of the question in a work of this kind, but a few general observations may be made regarding these references: (1) 1. 7 and 4. 15 represent Judah as better than Israel; the remaining passages, 5. 5, 10, 12, 13, 14; 6. 4, 11; 8. 14; 10. 11; 11. 12 (margin); 12. 2, make Judah equally guilty with Israel.[23] (2) The explanation that 1. 7 and 4. 15 were spoken before Hosea had become fully acquainted with conditions in Judah, cannot be accepted as satisfactory.[24] (3) The thought of 1. 7 is foreign to the rest of the chapter and 4. 15 interrupts the description of Israel's corruption, which advances from verse 14 immediately to verse 16. (4) There is little doubt, therefore, that the two passages which consider Judah better than Israel are later interpolations. (5) Of the other passages naming Judah it is claimed that they might easily be omitted from their present contexts without seriously affecting the

[21] See R. W. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, pp. clviii-clxii.

[22] So also Valeton, Nowack, Seesemann, Steuernagel, etc.

[23] 1. 11 is a promise of restoration to both Israel and Judah.

[24] The time that elapsed between the delivery of 4. 15 and that of chapter 5 cannot have been very long; moreover, it is exceedingly doubtful that the prophet ever thought more highly of Judah than of Israel.

thought, or, even, that the omission would restore consistency and continuity destroyed by the references to Judah. (6) It must be admitted that in some cases the parallelism and even the thought would be improved if the reference to Judah were deleted,[25] or if "Judah" were changed to "Israel."[26] In other instances, however, the omission or change would so seriously affect the thought of the passage that one may well hesitate to adopt the suggested emendations.[27]

The objections against the passages picturing a brighter future are of two kinds: (1) General objections, which deny all such promises to Hosea on the ground that he, like the other preexilic prophets, was preeminently a messenger of doom and that, therefore, the introduction of a note of hopefulness and promise would weaken his message.[28] (2) Specific objections to particular passages, such as abrupt transition, change in historical background, peculiarity of language and style, etc. The general objections to the acceptance of any Messianic promise as preexilic are discussed in connection with the Messianic hope of Isaiah, where it is shown that the arguments are altogether inconclusive.[29] The specific arguments advanced against particular sections can be tested only in connection with each separate passage; in general, however, they are of three kinds

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[25] As is suggested in connection with 1. 11; 5. 5; 6. 11; 11. 12.

[26] As is suggested in connection with 5. 10, 12, 13, 14; 6. 4; 8. 14; 10. 11; 12. 2.

[27] For instance, 5. 12-14.

[28] Nowack, Volz, Marti, Harper, and many more.

[29] See vol. I, pp. 137–139. Steuernagel, after careful investigation, reaches the conclusion that the general objections are of insufficient weight to impair the genuineness of the promise sections in the book of Hosea (*Einleitung*, p. 606).

closely related to each other: (1) The promise sections are said to be unsuitable for Hosea's situation; (2) they are said to interrupt in an unnatural manner his threats and announcements of judgment; (3) they are said to be contrary to Hosea's point of view. Now, it may be granted that the age of Hosea called for messages of warning and judgment, and, no doubt, he delivered such messages with all the force and energy he could command; on the other hand, it is equally true that promises of a brighter future might offer a powerful incentive to the people to change their conduct for the better. The promises are not made unconditionally; their fulfillment presupposes repentance and a return to Yahweh on the part of the people. Why such promises must be rejected as unsuitable in the days of Hosea or contrary to the prophet's point of view is not easily seen.

Harper mentions a number of explanatory phrases and sentences which he considers secondary, among them "because the shadow thereof is good,"[30] "with their flocks and with their herds,"[31] "as in the days of Gibeah,"[32] "for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it."[33] Among the alleged glosses of a miscellaneous character are the following: "That they may be cut off;"[34] "how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?"[35] "with my God."[36] Each of these must be examined on its own merits, and so other similar cases,

[30] 4. 13.
[31] 5. 6.
[32] 9. 9.
[33] 10. 5.
[34] 8. 4.
[35] 8. 5; the whole of 8. 10-14 is also questioned.
[36] 9. 8. For other illustrations see W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, pp. clxi, clxii.

which can be done only in connection with a detailed exegetical study; but, in general, it may be stated that the arguments advanced against the genuineness of these clauses and phrases are threefold: (1) They may be omitted without disturbing the thought; (2) the poetic meter requires the omission; (3) their connection with the context is not clear; sometimes they seem to contradict the context. Of the objections the first, as has been stated above, is never conclusive; the second will be convincing only to those who believe that the author used the exact metrical and strophical form advocated by the scholars who raise the objection; those who adhere to another metrical system may retain some of the rejected passages and suggest other alterations that may bring the text into harmony with their own system.[37] That there is in the prophetic books much more poetry than was formerly supposed, and that meter is of great value to the textual critic is not questioned; but that in the present state of uncertainty a hypothetical metrical system may be used as a final criterion by the student of the text

[37] The use of poetry in the prophetic literature is discussed above, vol. I, pp. 109, 110; it is a question, however, whether *prophetic* poetry may be expected to follow with absolute consistency the ordinary laws of poetry. When, for instance, Harper says (p. clxix) that "the analogy of other ancient literature should have suggested long ago the probability that Israel's early prophetic literature was poetry," and then gives as illustrations the Gilgamesh epic of Babylonia and the Homeric poems of Greece, he overlooks the fact that these are literary compositions of a nature entirely different from the discourses of the Hebrew prophets. The admission that, in view of the fact that these pieces were spoken rather than sung, we might expect "a much larger freedom in form" and "a greater variety," and that this "occasions the chief difference between prophetic poetry and psalm poetry," meets the case, provided it carries with it the recognition of sufficient freedom of form. But if such freedom is granted, changes in the text for the sake of meter become unnecessary, or, at least, few in number.

may be seriously doubted; and one may be justified in refusing to accept as secondary passages which on this ground alone are denied to Hosea.

Abruptness in transition cannot be regarded as proving conclusively the presence of interpolations. No doubt such abruptness and apparent lack of logical arrangement are found in Hosea more frequently than in almost any other Old Testament book, but they may be accounted for in most cases by (1) corruption of the text; (2) Hosea's peculiar style; (3) the fact that the book does not contain a verbatim report of the prophet's discourses; (4) the fact that apparently the separate utterances are arranged in neither chronological nor logical order. On these points the following observations may be made: (1) It is generally admitted that the text of Hosea has suffered serious corruption in the course of transmission. Even the cautious A. B. Davidson feels compelled to say, "A *multitude* of passages are corrupt, some incurably."[38] Again and again commentators must confess that the translation and interpretation of certain passages are in doubt, in many cases on account of textual corruption.[39] (2) The style of Hosea differs from that of all other Old Testament prophets. Jerome speaks of it as "broken up into short clauses";[40] Pusey writes: "Each verse forms a whole by itself, like one heavy toll of a funeral knell";[41] to which description Cheyne adds: "Even the fetters of grammar are almost too much for Hosea's vehement feelings."[42] The last

[38] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article, "Hosea."
[39] For instance, 4. 4; 7. 3-7; 11. 7, 12; 12. 1ff. and many more passages.
[40] Preface to *Minor Prophets*.
[41] *Minor Prophets*, p. 6.
[42] *Hosea*, p. 33.

quotation suggests the cause of the abruptness and disconnectedness. Hosea was a man of sensitive nature, his emotions were profoundly stirred, the truth burned in his heart; in sympathy and anguish he poured out his very soul, without any attempt to indicate the logical connection between the separate utterances. This the hearers might supply. (3) If the book consists of brief summaries, and if these summaries were united—by the prophet himself or by later compilers—without adequate regard for logical connection, abrupt transitions may well have resulted. Moreover, it is by no means certain that the several utterances, delivered at different times and under widely different circumstances, were ever bound together in close logical connection.

The conclusion of the whole matter is, not that the book is entirely free from later interpolations,[43] but that the later elements are not as numerous as some recent writers seem to think. Moreover, the later additions do not modify in any fundamental way the teaching of the prophet Hosea.

Harper recognizes the following steps in the literary history of the book: (1) Hosea prepared a collection of his sermons, to which he prefixed an introduction explaining his call to preach. (2) At the time of the fall of Samaria, in 722 B. C., the book was taken to Judah, where it came to have a position of prominence. (3) In postexilic times it underwent a Judahistic revision. (4) At a still later time the character of the book was transformed through the insertion of the Messianic passages.[44]

[43] See remarks on p. 359, concerning 1. 7 and 4. 15; 1. 10 to 2. 1 also may be a later addition, though in perfect harmony with the general teaching of Hosea.

[44] Modifications of minor significance are thought to have been made from time to time during all the periods indicated.

(5) The book assumed its present form during the Greek period. The present writer believes that the book reached its final form at a somewhat earlier period, and that, aside from textual corruptions and minor changes traceable to individual readers and copyists, only two stages may be distinguished in its literary history: (1) The preaching of Hosea and the summarizing of his discourses in brief poems; (2) the collection and arrangement of the material left by Hosea, soon after the death of the prophet, by an intimate friend and disciple, to whom may be credited also the present form of chapter 1, in which Hosea is referred to in the third person.[45]

Date of Hosea. The title of the book gives as the time of Hosea's activity "the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel." This fixes the date of Hosea's activity between about 750 and 700 B. C. Unfortunately, the testimony of the title cannot be accepted as final, because it did not originate with Hosea, nor has it been preserved in its original form: (1) Internal evidence shows that chapters 1 to 3 belong to the later years of Jeroboam II, and that, on the whole, chapters 4 to 14 belong to the troubled period subsequent to his death. This being so, it would seem strange, on the assumption that Hosea furnished the title, that the later

[45] It is not necessary to assume a formal Judahistic revision. As has been pointed out, some of the references to Judah may have appeared in the original prophecies; others may be traced to marginal notes added after the fall of Israel by readers in Judah, who could not understand the scarcity of references to their own country. Nor is it necessary to assume a transformation of the book through the interpolation of the Messianic promises. Most of the latter were undoubtedly a part of Hosea's message; others were inserted by later readers as marginal notes in places where they thought that the introduction of a promise would strengthen the prophetic appeal.

date—Uzziah to Hezekiah—should be given before the earlier—Jeroboam—and that no reference should be made to the successors of Jeroboam who were contemporaries of the kings of Judah whose names are given. (2) Hosea was a citizen of the northern kingdom. Under these circumstances, would we expect preference to be given to the kings of Judah, and mention made of only one king of Israel, his name appearing in last place? (3) Internal evidence makes it highly improbable that any of the prophecies in the book date from a period later than 734 B. C.; that is, from the greater part of Ahaz's reign, and the whole of Hezekiah's rule: (*a*) In 734 B. C. Tiglath-pileser IV deported to Assyria the inhabitants of the trans-Jordanic territory of Israel;[46] but in Hosea this district is referred to as an integral part of the northern kingdom.[47] (*b*) In 734 Assyria was an enemy of Israel, while during the succeeding years it claimed sovereignty over the latter; nowhere in the book does Assyria appear as an enemy in the present or the immediate past, but as a worthless and dangerous ally.[48] (*c*) The book is silent concerning the invasion of Judah by Israel and Damascus in 735/734 B. C.[49] If this important event had already taken place when Hosea prophesied, his silence would be inexplicable. Clearly, therefore, the conditions reflected throughout the whole of chapters 4 to 14[50] are those existing in Israel from the death of Jeroboam II down to about 735 B. C.; they are

[46] 2 Kings 15. 29; R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, p. 319.

[47] 6. 8; 12. 11; compare 5. 1.

[48] 5. 13; 7. 11; 8. 9; 12. 1; 14. 3.

[49] 2 Kings 16. 5-9; Isa. 7. 1-9.

[50] It is generally admitted that the background of chapters 1 to 3 is even earlier.

inconsistent with what we know of the period after 734 B. C.

These considerations have convinced modern scholars that the title in its present form cannot come from Hosea or even from a contemporary of the prophet. They are inclined to regard it as an expansion of an original title intended only for chapters 1 to 3 and containing simply the note, "in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel." When a title had to be found for the entire book by the collector or collectors of the Minor Prophets the other chronological notes were added, to show that the latter part of the book belonged to a later period and that, approximately at least, Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah and Micah.[51] In 721 B. C. the northern kingdom disappeared, while Judah maintained itself for nearly a century and a half longer; the restoration centered around Jerusalem, and the postexilic community considered itself the descendant of Judah; hence, in dating the entire book, during the postexilic period, precedence was given to the kings of Judah. While the considerations noted may fall short of actual demonstration, it is perfectly safe to conclude from the available evidence that Hosea's activity ceased about 735 B. C.

It seems to have begun after the close of the prophetic career of Amos: (1) The title—whatever the value of its testimony may be—points in that direction. (2) The prosperous condition of the country reflected in chapters 1 to 3, the earliest portion of the book, suggests a date at least as late as the time of Amos. (3) The judgment as announced even in chapters 1 to 3 appears to be more imminent than is suggested by Amos. (4) Internal evidence places it beyond doubt that chapters 4 to 14 belong

[51] Compare Isa. 1. 1; Mic. 1. 1.

to a still later period; for these chapters contain clear indications of the state of anarchy into which the northern kingdom fell after the death of Jeroboam about 741 B. C.[52] Consequently, the beginning of Hosea's ministry may be dated about 750 and his entire ministry between 750 and 735 B. C. Hosea may have heard Amos, or, at least, may have known of him and his work, though there are few traces of the earlier prophet's influence in the teaching of Hosea.[53]

Conditions Confronting Hosea. The political, social, moral, and religious conditions portrayed in the section on Amos, the forerunner of Hosea,[54] continued to the close of Jeroboam's reign; only, as time went on, some of the vices became more aggravated.[55] The death of Jeroboam marked the beginning of radical changes in the political situation. The dynasty of Jehu, of which Jeroboam was the fourth ruler, did not satisfy the eighth-century prophets, though its founder had been placed upon the throne with the sanction and aid of the prophetic party.[56] The luxury, selfishness, oppression of the poor, and kindred vices growing out of the prosperity of Jeroboam's reign were denounced in stern tones by Amos, who announced the overthrow of the "house of Jeroboam."[57] Almost the first words in the book of Hosea announce judgment upon the hated dynasty.[58] The threat was fulfilled shortly after the death of Jeroboam.

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[52] 7. 7; 8. 3, 4; 13. 10, 11; etc.

[53] Compare 4. 15 with Amos 5. 5; 8. 14 with Amos 1. 4.

[54] See below, pp. 419–422. Since Amos is earlier than Hosea it seems best to discuss the general conditions in connection with the former.

[55] 4. 1ff., 11ff.; 7. 1ff.; etc.

[56] 2 Kings, chapters 9, 10.

[57] Amos 7. 9.

[58] 1. 4, 5; the reference is to the crime narrated in 2 Kings 10. 11.

Party spirit, no longer held in check by a strong hand, broke out, and his son and successor, Zechariah, was slain in a conspiracy after a reign of only six months. With him the dynasty of Jehu came to an end. Of the period of anarchy which followed, Hosea supplies a vivid picture.[59] Kings came forward in rapid succession; Shallum, the murderer of Zechariah, was overthrown after one month, by Menahem.[60] He, to strengthen his position, bought the support of Tiglath-pileser IV.[61] At the same time, or shortly after, another party was seeking help from Egypt.[62] Menahem, the only ruler of this period to die a natural death, was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, who after two years was assassinated by Pekah.[63] The new king entered into an alliance with Rezin of Damascus, and together they invaded Judah.[64] Pekah was deposed and murdered by Hoshea,[65] with the connivance of Assyria,[66] and in 734 B. C. Hoshea became the last king of the northern kingdom.

Little needs to be added to what is said in the section on Amos concerning the religious and moral situation. Hosea sums up his indictment in one word—*whoredom.* Israel, the spouse of Yahweh, has proved faithless to her husband in the spheres of religion, morals, and politics. The people are without a knowledge of Yahweh;[67] consequently they are in ignorance concerning his real re-

[59] 7. 3-7; 8. 4.
[60] 2 Kings 15 14.
[61] 2 Kings 15. 19, 20; compare Hos. 8. 9, 10.
[62] 12. 1.
[63] 2 Kings 15. 25.
[64] 2 Kings 16. 6; Isa. 7. 1-3.
[65] 2 Kings 15. 30.
[66] See R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, pp. 319, 321.
[67] 4. 6; 5. 4; etc.

quirements. Their worship is not acceptable; for, while nominally they pay homage to Yahweh,[68] in reality they honor the Baals.[69] This illegitimate worship calls forth the severest and most persistent condemnation.[70] In the sphere of morals their lack of the knowledge of Yahweh has resulted in conduct that is absolutely contrary to the demands of Yahweh; immoralities, crimes, and vices of every description are practiced openly and in defiance of all prophetic exhortations.[71] In the sphere of politics the faithlessness manifests itself in a twofold manner: (1) in rebellion against all legitimate authority and assassinations of successive kings and princes;[72] (2) in dependence upon human defenses,[73] and foreign alliances,[74] rather than upon the power of Yahweh.

The Prophet. Hosea, like Amos, prophesied in the northern kingdom; but while Amos was a stranger,[75] sent upon a temporary mission, Hosea was a citizen of the north, bound by a sympathetic patriotism to the kingdom whose destruction he was commissioned to predict. "In every sentence," says Ewald, "it appears that Hosea has not only visited the kingdom of Ephraim, as Amos has done, but that he is acquainted with it from the depths of his heart, and follows all its doings, aims, and fortunes with the profound feelings gendered of such a sympathy as is conceivable in the case of a native prophet

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[68] 5. 6; 6. 6ff.

[69] 2. 5, 8, 13.

[70] 2. 2ff.; 4. 11ff.; 8. 4ff.; 9. 10; 10. 1ff.; 13. 1ff.; 14. 1-3.

[71] 4. 1, 2, 6ff., 13, 18; 6. 8, 9; 7. 1-7; 10. 4, 9, 12ff.

[72] 7. 1-7; 8. 4; 13. 10, 11.

[73] 8. 14; 10. 13; 14. 3.

[74] 5. 13; 7. 8, 11-13; 8. 9; 12. 1; 14. 3; compare 7. 16; 8. 13; 9. 3ff.; 10. 6; 11. 11.

[75] Amos was a native of Tekoa in Judah; see below, p. 422.

only."[76] In support of this claim attention may be called (1) to the general tone and spirit of the book. The pictures of the religious, moral, social, and political situation, drawn with such vividness, force, and compassion, must come from one who had lived for many years amid scenes of hopelessness and corruption, and whose heart came nigh breaking as he beheld his own countrymen throwing themselves headlong into ruin. (2) It is worthy of note that the localities mentioned in the book are almost without exception places in the north; Judah is mentioned rarely,[77] Jerusalem not at all. Israel is "*the* land";[78] the king of Israel is called "our king";[79] it is the ruling dynasty of the north that is condemned,[80] and the kingdom of the house of Israel that is to be made to cease.[81] The localities mentioned most prominently are Lebanon,[82] Gilead,[83] Mizpah and Tabor,[84] Gibeah,[85] Gilgal,[86] Jezreel,[87] Ramah,[88] Shechem,[89] and particularly the religious center Bethel[90] and the capital Samaria.[91]

Little is known of the prophet's personal history. His father is called Beeri.[92] Early Jewish writers identified this Beeri with Beerah, a Reubenite prince, carried into exile by Tiglath-pileser.[93] The prophet is represented

[76] *Prophets*, I, p. 211.

[77] Some scholars question the originality of all the references to Judah (see above, pp. 358–360).

[78] 1. 2.
[79] 7. 5.
[80] 1. 4.
[81] 1. 4.
[82] 14. 5-7.
[83] 6. 8; 12. 11.
[84] 5. 1.
[85] 5. 8; 9. 9; 10. 9.
[86] 4. 15; 9. 15; 12. 11.
[87] 1. 4; 2. 22.
[88] 5. 8.
[89] 6. 9.
[90] 4. 15; 5. 8; 10. 5, 8, 15; 12. 4.
[91] 7. 1; 8. 5, 6; 10. 5, 7; 13. 16.
[92] 1. 1.

[93] 1 Chron. 5. 6. According to an early Christian tradition he was of the tribe of Issachar, from a place called Belemoth or Belemon.

as marrying Gomer, who became the mother of three children, to whom he gave names symbolic of the destiny of his people.[94] Gomer proved unfaithful and left his home, but in the end was bought back by the prophet and restored to his home, though, temporarily at least, not to the full privileges of wifehood.[95] A Jewish legend states that Hosea died in Babylon, that his body was carried to Galilee and buried in Safed, northwest of the Sea of Galilee, on the highest point in that region.[96] According to another tradition he was a native of Gilead and was buried there; at any rate, the grave of *Nebi Osha,* that is, the prophet Hosea, is shown near *es-Salt,* the ancient Ramoth-Gilead, south of the Jabbok River.

There is nothing to indicate what was the occupation of the prophet. Duhm has tried to prove that he was a member of the priestly order.[97] The most important arguments in favor of this view are: (1) The frequent references to the priests;[98] (2) the references to the law;[99] (3) the mention of unclean things;[100] (4) the emphasis on ceremonial uncleanness;[101] (5) the reference to persecution in the temple.[102] Whatever his occupation in life may have been—the arguments certainly are not sufficient to prove that he was a priest—Hosea was a keen observer of the present, and he reveals

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[94] Chapter 1.

[95] 3. 1-3.

[96] See Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud,* p. 227.

[97] *Theologie der Propheten,* pp. 130, 131.

[98] See especially chapter 4.

[99] 4. 6; 8. 12.

[100] 9. 3; compare 5. 3; 6. 10.

[101] 9. 10.

[102] 9. 8. Similar expressions are found again only in the prophecies of Ezekiel, who was a priest; but the few scattered references in the book of Hosea are not conclusive.

a remarkable familiarity with the past history and the ancient traditions of his people.[103] If any inference may be drawn from the comparisons and images in which the book is rich, it will be that Hosea belonged to the country rather than to the city: (1) He is familiar with wild beasts, their mode of living, and the means with which they are caught;[104] (2) he knows the practices and methods of agricultural life;[105] (3) the imagery reflects life in the country.[106]

The question of Hosea's marriage, as narrated in 1. 2, 3,[107] requires further consideration. The account has received various interpretations, all of which may be arranged under three heads: 1. Hosea, at the divine command, is thought to have allied himself with a woman who at the time was known to be a sinner, for the purpose of reclaiming her. Concerning this interpretation the following observations may be in order: (1) There is no hint of such a purpose given or implied in the narrative. (2) How could Hosea have recognized the voice of Yahweh in the impulse which prompted him to marry a woman of unchaste life? Would he not have thrust from him such impulse as a snare and temptation? An alliance of this sort would have exposed the prophet

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[103] 2. 3, 15; 9. 9, 10; 10. 9; 11. 1, 8; 12. 3, 4, 5, 9, and many more.

[104] For example, the lion, leopard, and bear, 5. 14; 6. 1; 11. 10; 13. 7, 8; the wild ass, 8. 9; birds, 7. 11; 9. 11; 11. 11; snares and pits, 5. 1, 2; 7. 12; 9. 8.

[105] The stubborn heifer, 4. 16; the yoke, and ways of easing it, 11. 4; harnessing, threshing, plowing, harrowing, 10. 11ff.; the corn floor, 9. 1; 13. 3; etc.

[106] He makes reference to the vine and the fig tree, and the time when their fruit is choicest, 9. 10; 10. 1; the furrows of the field, 10. 11, 12; the poppy, 10. 4; thorns and thistles, 10. 8; nettles, 9. 6; reeds, 13. 15, etc.

[107] Compare also 3. 1.

to well-merited contempt, for such an act would have made the impression that he was condoning the immorality of his countrymen, which it was his mission to condemn. The language of A. B. Davidson is none too strong: "To suppose that Yahweh would have commanded his prophet to ally himself with a woman already known as of an unchaste life is absurd and monstrous."[108] (3) The most serious objection is based on the fact that the interpretation does not suit the symbolism. The relation between Hosea and Gomer is said to symbolize the relation between Yahweh and Israel. But it is the view of Hosea that Israel was pure at the beginning of her union with Yahweh, and only corrupted herself at a later time.[109] In order to have consistent symbolism Gomer must have been pure when Hosea married her and must have become corrupt later. The validity of these objections is generally recognized, and at present this interpretation has few defenders.[110]

2. Some interpreters regard the whole narrative as the account of a vision, a transaction in a dream or trance, never carried out in real life, or a parable, or allegory, or figurative mode of speech, without any historical basis in the domestic life of the prophet. This view also is open to serious objections: (1) It is undoubtedly true that sometimes the prophets express their teaching in the form of narratives of transactions which it is not necessary to suppose actually took place;[111] but it is equally true that sometimes the prophets performed

[108] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article, "Hosea."

[109] 9. 10; compare Jer. 2. 2; etc.

[110] The most elaborate defense of this interpretation on the part of a recent writer is found in J. M. P. Smith, *The Prophet and His Problems*, Chapter 5.

[111] See above, on Ezekiel, p. 345.

acts having a symbolic meaning.[112] In the narrative of Hosea there is not the slightest hint of its parabolic character; it bears the stamp of reality, and only a literal interpretation of the story as narrated in 1. 2-9 and 3. 1-3 seems to satisfy the demands of the language. (2) The parabolic teaching leaves us without a key to the prophet's teaching. How did he come to regard Yahweh as married to Israel? Even admitting that the use of the figure was sufficiently common among the Semites to require no special explanation, whence came the prophet's conviction of the intense and passionate love of Yahweh for his faithless spouse? Whatever may have been the origin of the figure, Hosea's ethical and spiritual conception is as far above the conception of the surrounding nations as the heavens are above the earth. It is not without reason, therefore, that Cheyne says: "He must have been prepared by personal experience to find a moral element in this conception which fitted it for the use of a prophet of Yahweh."[113] (3) The allegorical interpretation does not remove the moral difficulty. If the transaction itself would have been repugnant to the moral sense, is it probable that the prophet would have chosen it as the basis of an allegory? Moreover, if the prophet had a faithful wife, is it credible that he would have exposed her to the suspicion of unchastity and infidelity, as he would have done by the use of an allegory that does not bear its allegorical character upon its face? (4) The name of the wife is strongly in favor of a literal interpretation. If the story were an allegory, we would expect the wife to bear an allegorical

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[112] Compare Isa. 8. 1; Jer. 28. 10; 1 Kings 22. 11; and many more.
[113] *Hosea*, p. 18.

name; but "Gomer the daughter of Diblaim"[114] yields no obvious symbolical meaning. The natural inference is that it is the actual name of a woman who became the prophet's wife.[115]

3. The third, and at the same time the most probable, view regards the narrative as a record of actual facts, but not in the same way as the first interpretation discussed above, for Gomer is thought to have been unstained when she became the wife of Hosea. This view is supported by the expression "a wife of whoredom."[116] The evil tendencies were within, but had not yet manifested themselves. Hosea loved her dearly, but his love was not sufficient to prevent the outbreak. She finally abandoned him for her paramours, or perhaps, for the licentious rites connected with the worship of the Baals. As the prophet, his heart still burning with tender love for his faithless spouse, sat and pondered over his past domestic experience, he came to see that even this tragic occurrence could teach him a lesson which, in turn, he might teach Israel. He did not know the significance of it all at the time of the occurrence; only gradually did it dawn upon him that so far as his unique message of the divine love was concerned,[117] the unhappy alliance

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[114] 1. 3; Jezreel, 1. 4, Lo-ruhamah, 1. 6, and Lo-ammi, 1. 9, all tell their own story in unmistakable terms.

[115] Smith's interpretation, "daughter of fig-cakes," that is, a person who is held at low value, is improbable (*The Prophet and His Problems*, p. 121).

[116] 1. 2. Had Hosea meant to say that she was already devoted to an unchaste life, he would in all probability have called her "a harlot." The expression used seems to denote a woman of unchaste disposition.

[117] It would be wrong to assume that Hosea was not a prophet until after all these experiences had come to him. He must have been conscious of a prophetic mission even before the birth of his firstborn, else, how would he have come to give him a symbolic name? Nevertheless,

was the first step in his prophetic career. It was from the vantage point of the later revelation that Hosea described the earlier experience.[118]

Teaching of the Book. The message of Hosea was very comprehensive, touching upon the social and political as well as the religious and moral situation, but the principles and convictions underlying the more specific teaching are few and easily discerned. 1. Fundamental is the prophet's teaching concerning the *nature and character* of Yahweh: (1) Hosea was not a theoretical monotheist, but he may well be called a practical monotheist. The manner in which he refers to Yahweh as using other nations to carry out his purpose[119] makes it clear that Hosea believed the power and sovereignty of Yahweh to extend over other nations. (2) If Yahweh determines the destiny of nations, it follows that he is a God of supreme power.[120] (3) The use of this power in Yahweh's dealings with Israel and other nations is determined by ethical considerations: he will always punish sin; righteousness alone can win his favor.[121] (4) The distinguishing element in Hosea's teaching is his

the tone of the entire book shows that his own domestic experience was the means whereby God spoke to him and supplied him with the message of Yahweh's indestructible love for Israel. Therefore Hosea is justified in calling the impulse to marry Gomer the beginning of his prophetic ministry.

[118] For a more detailed discussion of Hosea's marriage and the various interpretations suggested see W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, pp. 208-210.

[119] For instance, 8. 1ff., 13; 9. 3.

[120] Hosea assumes the possession of this power by Yahweh; there are no passages in Hosea calling special attention to it, such as are found, for instance, in Amos 4. 3; 5. 8, 9; etc.

[121] The contemporaries of Hosea and Amos seemed to think that since Yahweh had chosen them, he would stand by them whatever their life or conduct might be. This misconception the eighth-century prophets tried to counteract by emphasizing the ethical character of Yahweh.

emphasis on the divine love,[122] which determines the whole outlook of the prophet. Hosea thinks of Yahweh as husband and father, with a love such as a husband may feel for his wife or a father for his son.[123]

2. Closely connected with and dependent upon Hosea's conception of Yahweh's character is his conception of Israel's relation to Yahweh and of the service acceptable to him: (1) Israel is in a peculiar sense the people of Yahweh. It became such through divine choice, and the union was cemented by a covenant made at the very beginning of Israel's history, at the time of the exodus from Egypt.[124] A covenant always involves mutual obligations. Yahweh has met his obligations;[125] but Israel has "transgressed" the covenant,[126] until Yahweh must set it aside, at least for a time.[127] (2) Concerning the service of Yahweh the popular conception in the eighth century seems to have been that the bringing of sacrifices and offerings met all religious requirements. Against this misapprehension Hosea boldly raised his voice:[128] The ceremonial is only a means to an end, and, therefore, secondary; even at its best it can never take the place of pure and undefiled religion; if it ever displaces the weightier matters, it becomes an abomination. In order to secure the divine approbation worship must be backed by a right spirit and pure life. This

[122] A favorite word with Hosea is *ḥesedh*, "loving-kindness." The word is used to express (1) the loving attitude of Yahweh to his people, (2) the loving attitude of the people toward Yahweh, (3) man's loving attitude toward his fellows, as a reflection of the divine love.

[123] 2. 19, 20; 11. 1, 8; compare 6. 4.

[124] 9. 10; 11. 1-4; 12. 9; 13. 4.

[125] 2. 8; 7. 15; 8. 12; 10. 1-11; 12. 8, 10; 13. 4-6.

[126] 6. 7; 8.1; 9. 10; 10. 9; 13. 2.

[127] 9. 15; compare 2. 9ff.

[128] 6. 6; compare 5. 6.

principle needed to be emphasized by Hosea the more strongly because in his days the ceremonial was far from being at its best, for the religious celebrations were accompanied by all manner of excesses.[129] Indeed, true Yahweh worship was practically unknown; the services in honor of Yahweh had become so mixed with Canaanitish elements that in reality they had deteriorated into a worship of the native Baalim.[130]

3. Other characteristic points in the prophet's teaching are connected with his promises of restoration. The religious, moral, and political apostasy made judgment inevitable; but Yahweh's love is unquenchable—in wrath he will remember mercy. The nation must die, but it will live again. Hosea pictures the future in the brightest colors: (1) While Hosea looks for extraordinary external prosperity,[131] the supreme goal of his aspirations is the reestablishment of a fellowship of life and love with Yahweh, a fellowship that will make it possible for the divine purpose concerning Israel to be completely realized.[132] (2) Hosea emphasizes heartfelt repentance as a condition of restoration.[133] Repentance,

[129] 4. 12ff.; 6. 7ff.

[130] 2. 5ff.; 4. 12ff.; 8. 4ff.; 9. 9; 13. 2.

The question has sometimes been raised whether Hosea condemned calf worship and worship at the local shrines as such; in other words, whether Hosea considered the worship of Yahweh in the Temple in Jerusalem to be the only legitimate form of worship. The question cannot be answered dogmatically. Since the calf worship and, indeed, the worship at all the local sanctuaries was hopelessly corrupt, it is not impossible that the prophet condemned the local sanctuaries simply on account of the accompanying corrupt practices, just as Isaiah (1. 15) condemned prayer because of the sinfulness of those who prayed.

[131] 2. 21, 22; 14. 5-8; compare Amos 9. 13.

[132] 2. 14, 19, 20; 14. 1-3; compare 6. 1-3.

[133] Of course, Hosea thinks, not of individual, but of national repentance.

according to Hosea, involves a sense of sin, sorrow for wrongdoing, and an earnest determination to live henceforth in a manner acceptable to Yahweh,[134] who despises sham repentance.[135] (3) Hosea is silent concerning the destiny of non-Israelitish nations; in describing the glories of the future he confines himself to the fortunes of the chosen people. (4) There are two passages in which the personal Messianic element appears.[136] Unfortunately, the genuineness of both passages is open to question; but the arguments against at least one of the passages, 3. 5, are by no means conclusive. In other words, Hosea may be the first prophet to mention the ideal king, who plays such a prominent role in the hopes of subsequent generations.[137]

2. The Book of Joel

Name and Personality of the Prophet. The author is called Joel, the son of Pethuel.[1] The Hebrew name, יוֹאֵל, *Yōēl*[2] means "Yahweh is God,"[3] and, like the name

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[134] 14. 1-3.

[135] 6. 4ff.

[136] 1. 11; 3. 5.

[137] Some commentators interpret "David" as equivalent to "dynasty of David," thus denying the presence of a personal element; however, the personal interpretation is far more natural. The name "David" is meant to suggest the character of the future king. In the words of Kirkpatrick: "David must mean, not merely a prince of David's line, but a second David, one who corresponds to David *as the man after God's own heart*, and who, as is plain from the position he occupies, is to be Jehovah's true representative" (*Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 139).

[1] Joel 1. 1.

[2] Septuagint Ἰωήλ, *Iōēl*, Vulgate, *Ioel*.

[3] Compare the name Elijah, which has a similar meaning, "My God is Yahweh."

Micah, may contain a confession of faith on the part of the child's parents.[4]

Of the personal history of Joel nothing is known beyond what may be gathered from the prophecy itself.[5] The message centers around Jerusalem and Judah; and the manner in which he refers to the land and the city —Zion,[6] the children of Zion,[7] Judah and Jerusalem,[8] the children of Judah and Jerusalem[9]—makes it probable that his home was in southern Palestine, perhaps in Jerusalem. He displays intimate acquaintance with the Temple and its service and personnel,[10] but the character of his references to the priests would seem to indicate that he was not one of them. Of Pethuel,[11] Joel's father, nothing is known.[12]

Contents and Outline. The utterances of Joel were called forth by what seems to have been a threefold calamity—locusts,[13] drought,[14] and conflagrations;[15] but

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[4] This is undoubtedly the meaning given to the name by the later Jews; but that this is the original meaning is not beyond question. Several scholars—E. Nestle, *Eigennamen*, p. 86; W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 301; G. B. Gray, *Hebrew Proper Names*, p. 153—suggest a connection with the Arabian deity *Wail*.

[5] Thirteen other persons bearing the name are mentioned in the Old Testament, but the prophet cannot be identified with any one of them.

[6] 2. 1, 15, 32; 3. 16, 17, 21.

[7] 2. 23.

[8] 2. 32; 3. 1, 16, 17, 18, 20.

[9] 3. 6, 8, 19.

[10] 1. 9, 13, 14. 16; 2. 14, 17.

[11] In some of the ancient versions the name appears as Bethuel or Bathuel; which has led Cheyne to suggest that the name is a corruption of "Tubal," the name of a north-Arabian tribe.

[12] The name of the father was probably added to distinguish the prophet from the other men bearing the same name.

[13] 1. 4.

[14] 1. 16-18.

[15] 1. 19, 20.

the horizon of the prophet[16] was not limited by that calamity; on the contrary, his chief interest was in a manifestation of Yahweh which, while still in the future, was, in the prophet's conception, near at hand. This manifestation he connected with the day of Yahweh, and during the entire discussion he kept this day prominently before his hearers and readers. The prophecy falls naturally into two parts, 1. 1 to 2. 17 and 2. 18 to 3. 21.[17] The first part consists of two discourses, which, however, center around one and the same theme, namely, a plague of locusts. The destruction wrought by the swarms of locusts convinces the prophet that the terrible day of Yahweh is at hand. Though near at hand, it is not too late to avert its terrors; hence the prophet summons the people to repentance.

With 2. 17 the first division of the book closes. Here we must assume an interval during which the assembly urged by the prophet was held and solemn rites of penitence and humiliation were observed. In the second part, 2. 18 to 3. 21, Yahweh is introduced as replying to the petition of the penitent people: He will remove the plague and bestow abundant temporal prosperity and rich spiritual gifts upon his people. When the day of Yahweh finally comes its terrors will fall not upon Israel, but upon the nations that have wronged the heritage of Yahweh.

Title: The author of the prophecy (1. 1).

I. The Harbinger of the Day of Yahweh (1. 2 to 2. 17).

1. Scourge of locusts, drought, and fire (1. 2-20).

[16] Or, at least, of the book in its present form.

[17] The Hebrew text is divided into four chapters. The five verses which in English appear as 2. 28-32 form in Hebrew chapter 3; which makes chapter 3 in the English text chapter 4 in Hebrew.

(1) Graphic description of the scourge (1. 2-4).
(2) Call upon various classes to mourn (1. 5-12).
Because
a. All luxuries are cut off (1. 5-7).
b. The worship of Yahweh is interrupted (1. 8-10).
c. Means for the sustenance of life are lacking (1. 11, 12).
(3) Exhortation to repentance (1. 13, 14).
(4) The awful calamity the forerunner of the day of Yahweh —Prayer for mercy (1. 15-20).

2. The scourge the forerunner of the Day of Judgment; high time for repentance (2. 1-17).
(1) More vivid description of the calamity (2. 1-11).
(2) Urgent exhortation to repentance (2. 12-17).

II. The Day of Yahweh a Day of Blessing to Israel, a Day of Terror to Her Enemies (2. 18 to 3. 21).

1. The people's repentance (implied); Yahweh's gracious change of purpose (2. 18).
2. Blessings promised (2. 19-29).
(1) Temporal blessings (2. 19-26).
(2) Spiritual blessings (2. 27-29).
a. Restoration of Yahweh's presence (2. 27).
b. Outpouring of the divine spirit (2. 28, 29).
3. Signs of the approaching judgment (2. 30, 31).
4. Escape of a remnant (2. 32).
5. Judgment on the nations (3. 1-16a).
(1) All wrongs committed against the people of Yahweh to be avenged (3. 1-3).
(2) The bitterest enemies to suffer the severest punishment (3. 4-8).
(3) Description of the Judgment scene (3. 9-16a).
6. Glorification of the people of Yahweh: Israel's final felicity contrasted with the desolation of her enemies (3. 16b-21).

Unity of the Book. The book of Joel has commonly been accepted as the work of one author. However, in 1872 M. Vernes suggested that 2. 28 to 3. 21, —in Hebrew, chapters 3 and 4—were not written by the

author of 1. 2 to 2. 27,—in Hebrew, chapters 1, 2.[18] Subsequently he restated this position,[19] but in 1880 he modified his view, and while still maintaining the striking differences between the two sections, he no longer insisted on difference of authorship.[20] Independently of Vernes, in 1896 J. W. Rothstein attempted to prove that the book was not a literary unit.[21] He based his argument chiefly upon the difference in historical background, of which a comparison of 1. 1 to 2. 27 with 2. 28 to 3. 21 convinced him. He pointed out, among other things, that in the first part the state and the nation are pictured in healthy political condition; the only calamity mentioned is a terrible plague of locusts and drought; more severe judgment is to be withheld if the people repent and turn to Yahweh. Rothstein was inclined to assign this section to the preexilic period. The background of 2. 28 to 3. 21 he supposed to be purely political: The nation no longer enjoys safety from foreign foes; the people of Yahweh are represented as in distress, and, evidently, many are in exile. Consequently, Rothstein assigned these verses to a postexilic date.

Nowack, Marti, and other writers have questioned the validity of Vernes' and Rothstein's objections and have argued in favor of literary unity,[22] and their discussions may still be regarded as representing the more commonly accepted view. Others, among them several

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[18] *Le Peuple d'Israel et ses Espérances*, pp. 46-54, 162, 163.

[19] *Histoire des Idées Messianiques*, pp. 13, 14.

[20] *Mélanges de Critique Religieuse*, pp. 218-228.

[21] In the German translation of S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 333, 334.

[22] The former in his commentary on *Die Kleinen Propheten*, the latter in *Das Dodekapropheton;* compare also Marti in Kautzsch, *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments.*

more recent writers, are agreed that the book in its present form cannot be the work of a single writer, though they are not agreed as to the extent of the secondary material.[23] Bewer, after a careful, detailed study of the book reaches the following conclusions: (1) Joel wrote chapters 1 and 2[24] and 3. 1-4a; 4. 2a, 9-14a;[25] (2) an editor wrote the remainder, connecting chapters 1 and 2 with chapters 3 and 4 by a series of interpolations, which are characterized, as is all his work, by dependence on other prophecies; (3) the paragraph 4. 4-8 is a still later insertion.[26] The problems involved in this discussion are so complex that they can be discussed only in connection with a detailed exegetical study, such as may be found, for instance, in Bewer's commentary. The present writer believes that both divisions of the book may be traced, in their essence, to Joel, but that both parts have suffered from later modifications, expansions, and interpolations.

Date of the Book. Perhaps no other book in the Old Testament has been assigned to as many different dates as has the prophecy of Joel. Even during the past half century, when investigation has proceeded on scientific principles, scholars have differed regarding its date by a space of more than five centuries. In other words, the book has been dated as early as the reign of Rehoboam,

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[23] Ryssel agrees essentially with Rothstein; Sievers denies to Joel, in addition to some minor interpolations, 2. 12-14, 19-27; 3. 1-5; 4. 1-8, 17-21; Duhm rejects the whole of 2. 18 to 4. 21.

[24] Except 1. 15; 2. 1b, 2, 6, 10, 11, 27.

[25] Bewer, like the authors named in note 23, follows the Hebrew arrangement of the text; in English the corresponding verses are 2. 28-31a; 3. 2a, 9-14a.

[26] *Joel*, p. 56. The question of unity is discussed at some length on pp. 49-56.

the son of Solomon, that is, before 900 B. C., and as late as the fourth century B. C., and, parts of it, even later.[27] Moreover, it has been dated in practically every century between these extremes. There are, however, two periods around which the most earnest efforts to fix the date of Joel may be grouped:[28] (1) The minority of King Joash, or Jehoash, of Judah, about 830 B. C.;[29] (2) the late Persian period, about 400 B. C.[30]

The wide divergence of opinion is due entirely to the absence of decisive data on which conclusions may be

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[27] Scholars who ascribe the contents to more than one author have to find suitable dates for the several sections. Vernes was inclined to place both contributors in the fourth century; Rothstein assigned the first part to the reign of Joash, about 830 B. C., the second to the postexilic period; Ryssel dated the first part before Amos, the second in the time of the Ptolemies; Duhm favored the fourth century for 1. 1 to 2. 17, but a much later date for the rest of the book. Bewer places Joel about 400 B. C. and the editors responsible for the later additions a few decades later.

[28] A few writers, like Calvin and Ryle, have been ready to admit that the date cannot be determined.

[29] Compare 2 Kings 11 and 12. This date was first defended with much ability by Credner in 1831; he was followed by Ewald, Hitzig, Bleek, Delitzsch, Keil, and others. Among more recent defenders of this early date are Kirkpatrick, von Orelli, Beecher, Robertson, Sinker, Cameron, and, less positively, von Baudissin. A later date in the preexilic period is suggested by Koenig: "Unquestionable indications point to the seventh century, and probable indications to the last years of Josiah, or perhaps to those immediately following." Compare also Strack, *Einleitung*, p. 100.

[30] The postexilic date was first proposed by Vatke in 1835; he was followed by Hilgenfeld in 1866, Duhm in 1875, and, in 1879, by Merx, to whom belongs much of the credit of having established the theory of a postexilic date on a firm basis. Since then the great majority of Old Testament scholars have declared themselves in favor of a postexilic date or dates—among them Kuenen, A. B. Davidson, Driver, Wellhausen, W. R. Smith, Holzinger, Farrar, G. B. Gray, Kautzsch, Cornill, Wildeboer, G. A. Smith, Nowack, Briggs, Marti, R. W. Rogers, H. P. Smith, Bennett, W. R. Harper, Vernes, Bewer, Kent, and many more.

based. External evidence is entirely lacking, unless we regard as external evidence the position of the book in the series of the Minor Prophets. Arguing from this position, Jerome made Joel a contemporary of Hosea, for he adopted the rule that, whenever there is no certain proof of the time in which a prophet lived, we are to be directed in our conjectures by the time of the preceding prophet whose date is better known. The internal evidence is fourfold: (1) The historical situation stated or implied; (2) theological ideas expressed or reflected; (3) literary parallels with other Old Testament books; (4) linguistic and stylistic peculiarities.

1. *Historical situation stated or implied:* The prophet speaks of a great famine,[31] due to the devastation of the land by swarms of locusts,[32] drought,[33] and, perhaps, conflagrations.[34] Egypt and Edom are denounced for shedding "innocent blood";[35] Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia are said to have been the chief offenders in the ill treatment of the Israelites: they have taken the silver and gold of Yahweh; his "precious things" they have carried into their temples; and they have sold Jews as slaves to the Greeks.[36] The "heritage" of Yahweh is described as "scattered among the nations" that have "parted" his land.[37] The term "Israel" is used in the sense of "Judah," as representing the entire chosen people.[38] Elders and priests are prominent.[39] The valley of

[31] 1. 11, 12.
[32] 1. 4, 6, 16; 2. 4-11; etc.
[33] 1. 17ff.
[34] 1. 20.
[35] 3. 19.
[36] 3. 4-6.
[37] 3. 2.
[38] Compare 2. 23 with 2. 27; 3. 1 with 3. 2; 3. 16b with 3. 16a, 17.
[39] 1. 9, 13, 14; 2. 17.

Jehoshaphat is the scene of the final conflict.[40] The silence of Joel on certain points may not be without significance: He makes no mention of a king or of princes, the northern kingdom is disregarded, the long-time enemies of Israel—the Assyrians, the Syrians, and the Chaldeans—appear nowhere on the scene.

2. *Theological ideas expressed or reflected:* The Law is not mentioned, but there is much insistence on some of its requirements.[41] Great consternation is felt over the cutting off of the meal offering and the drink offering;[42] while the greatest blessing that Yahweh can grant in response to the prayers of penitence is the restoration of the daily sacrifice.[43] The formal fast and the solemn assembly play an important part.[44] The interest in the religious cult is very prominent.[45] In summoning the people to repentance Joel calls upon the priests to take the initiative.[46] There is no thought of the conversion of the nations;[47] and the outpouring of the Divine Spirit is restricted to the households of Judah.[48] Throughout the book the day of Yahweh occupies a central place. Attention may also be called to the silence of Joel concerning specific sins, such as worship on the high places, and a future exile as a divine means of purification.

3. *Literary parallels with other Old-Testament books.* The short book of Joel, containing only seventy-three verses, presents a remarkable number of parallels with other Old Testament writings. Compare, for instance, 1. 15 and 3. 14 with Isa. 13. 6 and Ezek. 30. 2, 3 and Zeph. 1. 7; 2. 1, 2 with Zeph. 1. 14, 15; 2. 3 with Ezek.

[40] 3. 2.
[41] 1. 9, 13, 14; 2. 12-17.
[42] 1. 9, 13, 16; 2. 14.
[43] 2. 14.
[44] 1. 14; 2. 15ff.
[45] 1. 9, 13, 14; 2. 12-17.
[46] 1. 13; 2. 17.
[47] Compare chapter 3.
[48] 2. 29.

36. 35; 2. 6 with Nah. 2. 10; 2. 17 with Psa. 42. 2, 9 and 79. 10 and 115. 2; 2. 27 and 3. 17 with Ezek. 36. 11 and other passages in the same book; also with Lev. 18. 2, 4, 30, etc.; 2. 28 with Ezek. 39. 29; 2. 32 and 3. 17 with Obad. 17; 3. 2 with Ezek. 38. 22; 3. 3 with Obad. 11 and Nah. 3. 10; 3. 4, 14 with Obad. 15; 3. 10 with Isa. 2. 4 and Mic. 4. 3; 3. 16 with Amos 1. 2; 3. 17 with Ezek. 36. 11 and Obad. 17; 3. 18 with Amos 9. 13; 3. 19 with Obad. 10. Altogether about twenty parallels may be noted.

4. *Linguistic and stylistic characteristics.* Like every writer, Joel has his own linguistic peculiarities. His style is smooth and flowing, he uses peculiar constructions, gives uncommon meanings to common words, uses several words not common in Hebrew but widely used in Aramaic, and some of his words, phrases, and constructions are found again only in the later literature of the Old Testament.

In view of the diversity of opinion regarding the character and weight of the evidence presented in the preceding paragraphs it may be well to consider it somewhat more in detail. As has been pointed out, the only bit of external evidence is the position of the book in the collection of Minor Prophets. The fact that Joel occupies second place has been thought by some to raise a strong presumption in favor of an early date; to others it has seemed of sufficient significance to exclude even the possibility of a postexilic date. However, the position of the book is by no means conclusive. The arrangement of the Minor Prophets, while in the main intended to be chronological, cannot be followed implicitly when a question of date is under consideration. Even those who rely upon the argument admit the uncertainty; else,

why do they place Joel before Hosea—in the days of Joash—or after Amos, Micah, Nahum, and Zephaniah —in the later years of Josiah—when in the list of Minor Prophets the book occupies second place?[49] Evidently, the one bit of external evidence has little force.

The use of the internal evidence is beset with many difficulties, for almost every statement presenting such evidence is capable of more than one interpretation:

1. Locusts, drought, and jungle fires have been the curse of Palestine from the earliest times to the present; hence the prevalence of these plagues at the time Joel's prophecies were uttered helps but little in the attempt to fix the time of the prophet's activity. True, it is claimed that the prophet's absorption in the ravages of the locusts reflects the feeling of a purely agricultural community, such as Israel was before the eighth century B. C., but an exactly similar condition existed in Palestine during part of the Persian period. The silence of the prophet concerning the Syrians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans points either to a very early or to a very late period; either to a time when these nations had not yet exerted any influence on Judah or when they had again disappeared from the scene.[50] The nations condemned

[49] It is universally agreed that chronologically Amos preceded Hosea, while canonically he follows; moreover, Obadiah and Jonah are later than Micah, who follows them in the collection of Minor Prophets.

[50] In the days of Joash Assyria and Babylon had not yet come into serious conflict with Judah. But even before the time of Joash Judah had been drawn into conflict with Syria (2 Kings 8. 25ff.); and again during the reign of this king the former suffered severely at the hands of the latter (2 Kings 12. 17ff.); it is quite probable, therefore, that even during the minority of Joash danger was threatening; which means that the silence concerning Syria may point to a different period. In postexilic times the three nations had ceased to be world powers, and silence concerning them would be perfectly intelligible.

are Egypt, Edom, Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia. The defenders of the early date explain the charge against Egypt by Shishak's invasion of Judah about a century before the time of Joash,[51] that against Edom by the latter's revolt against Jehoram, about 848 B. C.[52] The condemnation of the Philistines is justified by their attack upon Israel at about the same time.[53] The Phœnicians do not appear as enemies of Judah in the early historical books but since they are condemned as treacherous slave traders by Amos,[54] they may have been guilty of cruelty against Hebrews at the earlier date.[55] In exilic and post-exilic times the Edomites showed themselves intensely hostile to the Jews;[56] Tyre and Sidon carried on an active slave trade; Egypt was an old-time enemy of Judah, who might equally well be mentioned after the exile as before. The postexilic theory finds it difficult to account for the condemnation of Philistia, for no expression of hostility on the part of the Philistines against the Jews is known during the Persian age.[57]

The Phœnicians sold their slaves to the Greeks.[58] Intercourse between the two nations was more common in postexilic times than in the ninth century B. C. More-

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[51] 1 Kings 14. 25ff.

[52] 2 Kings 8. 20-22.

[53] 2 Chron. 21. 16ff.

[54] Amos 1. 9, 10.

[55] Amos does not state that the slaves were stolen from Judah; hence the theory of an early date leaves the reference to the Phœnicians obscure.

[56] Ezek. 25. 12ff.; Psa. 137. 7; etc.

[57] On either theory difficulties remain, which must be traced to the incompleteness of the historical records. There is no reason for believing that the biblical historians purposed to narrate every event in the nation's history.

[58] 3. 6.

over, during the later period slave trade was carried on between the two nations; at the same time the possibility of commercial intercourse centuries earlier cannot be denied.[59] Absence of any mention of the northern kingdom may be explained by the exclusiveness of the vision and mission of Joel: he was a prophet of Judah, whose interest was confined to Judah; why should he name Israel? Besides, the feeling between the two kingdoms at this early time was not very cordial, which would explain the silence of a southern prophet concerning the north. The use of "Israel" as a designation of the whole people may be explained in a similar manner. On the other hand, it would be equally legitimate to explain the silence as due to the fact that the northern kingdom was no longer in existence, which would point to a date subsequent to 722 or even 586 B. C.

The most important historical references appear in 3. 1, 2, 5. Those who favor the early date give the following explanation: "I shall bring back the captivity" is a phrase used as early as the time of Amos and Hosea,[60] and therefore does not necessarily presuppose the exile as a fact of history; moreover, the phrase may be translated "I will restore the fortune," with no specific reference to an exile. The dispersion among the nations is interpreted as referring, not to the dispersion of the entire nation,[61] but, "rather, to the sale of captives as slaves to distant nations."[62] The division of the land is explained by the successes of the Philistines, the

[59] The name *Yawan*, "Greece," occurs on the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, about 1400 B. C.; however, the form of the name in Joel points to a late date.

[60] Amos 9. 14; Hos. 6. 11.

[61] In 722 or 597 or 586 B. C.

[62] Compare Amos 1. 6, 9.

Edomites, and other surrounding nations during the reign of Jehoram.

These explanations, however, fail to do justice to the language of 3. 1-5. True, "I shall bring back the captivity," is more or less ambiguous, but the definite statement, "my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land," presupposes a more serious calamity than was suffered in the ninth century or earlier. Moreover, verse 5 implies the plunder of the Temple itself. All these expressions become perfectly intelligible if uttered after the destruction of the city and the Temple in 586 B. C., but there is no calamity in the history of Judah before that event of which such language could be used. Another link in the historical argument is the absence of all reference to a king or to princes, while elders, and especially priests, are prominent. This points to a period when there was no king —during and after the exile—or when the king was not in the eye of the public—during the minority of Joash, who came to the throne in his seventh year.[63] The valley of Jehoshaphat is named as the scene of the final conflict. Jehoshaphat is said to have gained a great victory over the combined forces of Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites only about a generation before the time of Joash;[64] and it is thought by some that the remembrance of this recent event may account for the use of the name. It is more probable, however, that we have here no historical allusion at all, but that the name was selected because of its suggestiveness, "Yahweh judges."

From this survey it would appear that the historical

[63] 2 Kings 12. 1ff. Of course, the silence concerning the king may be purely accidental.

[64] 2 Chron. 20. 26.

references and allusions, with one exception, may be interpreted as pointing, either to an early or to a late date. The exception is 3. 1-5, which receives a natural interpretation only on the assumption that the author is looking back to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. as an accomplished fact.

2. Turning to the theological ideas of the book, we discover a marked insistence on ceremonial practices and requirements.[65] That the latter were known in early prophetic times cannot be doubted in the presence of frequent references to them in the messages of the eighth-century prophets;[66] but in the emphasis which Joel places on ritual service he differs very strikingly from all the early prophets.[67] Whenever the legislation concerning ritual and sacrifices may have originated, it is a matter of history that the emphasis upon the ritual on the part of the religious leaders did not become widespread until after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. Similarly, priests were the outstanding leaders during and after the exile. The silence of Joel concerning high places, idolatry, and moral apostasy presents a strong contrast to the vehement utterances of earlier prophets. Not that he omits the moral element from his preaching; but he emphasizes the side of religion which the earlier prophets considered of little or no consequence, while he puts less stress than they on purely ethical requirements. A very early date or the particularistic spirit of the later Judaism may account for the prophet's attitude toward the nations; in the same way, a very early or a very

[65] Compare 1. 9, 13, 14; 2. 12-17.

[66] Compare, for instance, Amos 5. 21-23; Isa. 1. 11-15.

[67] An eighth-century prophet would not have singled out the bringing of the meal offering and the drink offering as the most essential element of religion.

late date may explain the silence concerning a future exile. A very important element in the prophet's teaching is the day of Yahweh. Now, while this day appears in the prophetic thought at least as early as the eighth century,[68] the conception of the day in Joel is such that it points clearly and definitely to postexilic times. Thus, while most of the religious ideas expressed in the book are by no means decisive, they are all more easily accounted for on the hypothesis that Joel was a late prophet, while some of them demand a postexilic date.

3. The literary parallels furnish another set of data. When the parallels are as numerous and striking as they are in this case, it becomes impossible to regard them as pure coincidence, and we are shut up to one of two possible conclusions: Either Joel is a very early and popular book, constantly used by writers from Amos to Malachi, or it is a very late book making extensive use of earlier prophecies. But why should so many prophets whose originality is beyond question borrow from this little book of seventy-three verses? Surely, there is nothing in the contents to give it such extraordinary influence. In the study of parallel passages it is always more or less difficult to state with certainty which of two passages may be dependent on the other; in almost every case the student is influenced in his final decision by other considerations; hence the wide differences of opinion regarding the bearing of the parallel passages on the question of date. G. B. Gray, for instance, reaches the conclusion that Joel is the borrower,[69] while von Orelli insists that the literary parallels point to a date earlier

[68] Compare, for instance, Amos 5. 18-20.

[69] *Expositor*, September 1893, pp. 208ff. "The Parallel Passages in Joel in Their Bearing on the Question of Date."

than Amos. Other scholars admit that no definite conclusions can be reached.[70] A study of the parallels is instructive, but the present writer ventures the assertion that in no case is it possible—apart from other considerations—to state who is the borrower.

4. Language and style present similar difficulties. Pearson, who favors an early date, writes, "Joel's peculiar style is certainly an early one."[71] Over against this Holzinger, after the most painstaking examination of the book, thinks himself justified in saying that on the basis of linguistic characteristics alone the book must be assigned to the "youngest layer of Old Testament literature."[72] This claim is called a "strange misrepresentation" by Kirkpatrick, who, after admitting the weakness of the linguistic argument, concludes with the statement that "if any argument can be drawn from it, it is in favor of an early date."[73] In brief, the facts are these: The style of Joel is smooth and flowing, which may be due either to a date during the golden age of Hebrew prophecy, or to an intimate acquaintance with earlier writers. The diction of Joel is in the main pure and classical, but Holzinger has conclusively shown that there are peculiarities in the use of words and in grammatical constructions which reveal considerable Aramaic influ-

[70] Compare the words of Driver, "The parallels cannot be used for determining the date of Joel; we can only, after having determined his date on independent grounds, point to the parallels as illustrating either his dependence upon other prophets or their dependence upon him (*Introduction*, p. 313). In his *Commentary* on Joel he states—pp. 19ff. —that the literary parallels confirm the conclusion reached on other grounds that Joel is a postexilic prophet.

[71] *The Prophecy of Joel*, p. 107.

[72] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1889, pp. 89-131, "Sprachcharakter und Abfassungszeit des Buches Joel."

[73] *Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 73.

ence and thus point rather to the later period of Hebrew literature—in other words, to the centuries following the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.

In conclusion: While many of the relevant data are inconclusive, there are some, such as the historical references in 3. 1-5, the emphasis on the more external elements of religion, the conception of the day of Yahweh, and some linguistic peculiarities, which point clearly and definitely to a postexilic date. The exact date during the later period cannot be determined, but a date subsequent to the final establishment of the law under Nehemiah, which helped to produce the narrow exclusiveness reflected in Joel, perhaps about 400 B. C., is the most probable.[74]

Interpretation of the Book. Much controversy has centered around the interpretation of the first part of the book of Joel,[75] especially of the description of the plague of locusts in 2. 1-11. 1. The view commonly accepted in ancient times, which, however, finds little support among moderns, regards the description as *allegorical.* The locusts are thought to symbolize hostile armies; the four swarms, four attacks either by one enemy or by successive world powers. 2. The picture of the locusts has been interpreted as an *apocalyptic* description of the terrors of the last days. The locusts in chapter 2 are understood to represent locusts; not, however, the locusts of the desert, but "weird supernatural creatures, a mysterious host of unearthly warriors." 3. According to the

[74] If a later revision is assumed, the reviser must have done his work not far from this date. According to Bewer, "The book of Joel was completed by the middle of the fourth century B. C. If we place Joel himself at about 400 B. C. and the editor a few decades later, we shall probably not be far off the mark" (*Joel*, pp. 61, 62).

[75] 1. 2 to 2. 17.

historical interpretation the locusts are locusts such as may be seen in the East to-day, though in chapter 2 the presence of a touch of poetic imagination and Oriental hyperbole is recognized.[76]

Another question that enters into the interpretation of the book is whether in 1. 2 to 2. 17 the prophet describes a present plague or predicts a future calamity. The defenders of the *allegorical* view do not agree. Hilgenfeld thinks that the four swarms are to be explained as referring to the four attacks of the Persians upon the Jews, in 525, 484, 460, and 458 B. C., and he locates the prophecy near the last mentioned date. Pusey, Hengstenberg, and others regard the calamity as still in the future. The former sees the fulfillment in the ravages of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Macedonians, and Romans; the latter in the attacks of the Assyrian-Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman armies. The *apocalyptic* view makes the book, with the possible exception of chapter 1, a prediction; the plague described in chapter 2 will come as a sign or accompaniment of the day of Yahweh. The *historical* theory sees in the plague an event of history and experience, which formed the occasion of the prophecy; the day of Yahweh alone is still in the future.

Two questions, therefore, are involved in this discussion: 1. Is 1. 2 to 2. 17 to be understood literally or not? 2. Are these verses to be regarded as descriptive or predictive?

In favor of the allegorical view Pusey, following Hengstenberg, advances eight distinct arguments, supplemented by some minor considerations:[77] (1) The expres-

[76] Especially in 2. 1-11.

[77] *Minor Prophets*, pp. 150, 151.

sion "the northerner"[78] cannot refer to locusts, since they never invade Palestine from the north. (2) The prayer "Give not thine heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them,"[79] obviously points to fear of subjection by a foreign foe. (3) The enemy is alluded to as possessing moral responsibility.[80] (4) The prophet speaks of fire, flame, and drought,[81] which proves that he has in mind something more than a plague of locusts. (5) The imagery would be too extravagant, if used of a mere plague of locusts: *a.* Whole nations are terrified; *b.* the sun and moon are darkened, the shining of the stars is prevented; *c.* towns are devastated—fields are the scenes of the destructive labors of the locusts; in towns they are destroyed.[82] (6) The effects of the scourge are such as do not result from mere locusts: *a.* The quantity of material used for the meal offering and drink offering[83] was so small that even a famine could not occasion their discontinuance; *b.* the promise, "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten,[84] cannot refer to locusts, because they are only a passing scourge; they destroy the fruit for only one year, not that of several years; *c.* the exhortation to the beasts of the field to rejoice because the tree beareth her fruit[85] must be a metaphor, for trees are not food for cattle; *d.* the scourge is spoken of as greater than any which

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[78] 2. 20.

[79] 2. 17.

[80] 1. 6; 2. 18, 20.

[81] 1. 19, 20.

[82] He adds that, since locusts are a common scourge, no one would use such extravagant imagery in describing their destructiveness.

[83] 1. 9.

[84] 2. 25.

[85] 2. 22.

they or their fathers knew of, and as one ever to be remembered,[86] "but Israel had many worse scourges than any plague of locusts, however severe." (7) "The destruction of this scourge of God is described in a way taken doubtless in its details from the destruction of locusts, yet as a whole physically impossible in a literal sense." (8) Pusey, regarding the day of Yahweh as identical with the scourge described by the prophet, concludes that "the day of Yahweh includes more than any plague of locusts."

The weakness of these arguments is self-evident. For instance, it is nowhere stated that the locust plague is the only calamity; the prophet probably means just what he says, that drought and fires accompanied the plague of locusts. Moreover, he does not compare the plague of locusts with all kinds of calamities; he simply says that it was the severest plague of locusts. The identification of the plague with the day of Yahweh rests upon misinterpretation.[87] Several of the other arguments lose their force when it is remembered that description does not exclude the use of poetic and figurative language. The testimonies of scores of travelers show the devastation wrought by the plague of locusts as described by Joel to be quite within the realm of possibility. There is not a single feature in the picture of Joel which is not supported by one or more modern travelers. True, ordinarily locusts do not appear in successive years, but this is not a universal rule, and the plague described by Joel was one of unusual severity. The term "northerner" probably has no reference to the direction from which the plague came but to the office of the locusts as

[86] 1. 2, 3.

[87] Compare 1. 15; 2. 1; etc.

"heralds of the last day."[88] The argument drawn from the prayer in 2. 17 receives its only force from a misinterpretation[89] or, possibly, a mistranslation.[90]

Not only are the arguments in favor of the allegorical interpretation inconclusive, but the terms of the description, if naturally interpreted, show this interpretation to be impossible. Is it probable that any sane writer would liken a symbol to the reality it is intended to symbolize? Is it probable that any one would speak of a victorious army as entering a conquered city like a thief? Even a modified form of the allegorical view, which admits that the references in chapter 1 are to real locusts, but insists that chapter 2 refers to an army of soldiers, is untenable, since the army of chapter 2 is expressly identified with the locusts of chapter 1.[91] Moreover, even in chapter 2 the prophet speaks only of such acts of devastation as are actually wrought by locusts. There is no hint of ravages wrought by a human army, of bloodshed, destroyed cities, and captives.[92]

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[88] According to Jer. 1. 14 and Ezek. 38. 6, 15 the instruments of Yahweh's wrath in the Final Judgment are to come from the north. From these passages the term "northerner" may have received a typical meaning, the bringer of doom.

[89] The passage reads "Give not thy heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them." The prophet recognizes an intermediate stage between the calamity and the nation's subjugation. A scourge of locusts might exhaust the resources of the country, and an alert enemy might improve the opportunity to overwhelm the nation.

[90] Compare the marginal translation, "that the nations should use a byword against them."

[91] Compare, for instance, 2. 11 with 2. 25 with 1. 4.

[92] The weakness of the apocalyptic interpretation is revealed by the arguments advanced against the allegorical view. Its absolute untenableness appears in the discussion of the proper interpretation of 1. 2 to 2. 17.

In discussing the question, Is 1. 2 to 2. 17 descriptive or predictive? it is not necessary to discuss or refute in detail the arguments advanced in favor of the predictive interpretation; it may be sufficient to call attention to the following two considerations: (1) The general character of prophecy favors the descriptive interpretation. The prophet always starts from the circumstances of his own day; his utterances are not abstract productions of the study; they are direct messages to the people for the purpose of meeting a present crisis. If, now, the plague is removed into the future, the occasion for Joel's message disappears, and the prophecy becomes a "mere learned study or *midrash* on preceding prophetical literature." (2) The only natural interpretation of the appeal in 1. 2-4, of the exhortation in 1. 13; 2. 12ff., and the description in 1. 15-20 is that the prophet addresses the people and the priests out of an actual present experience. There is, indeed, no feature in the description of the plague to indicate that this part of the book is to be regarded as predictive.

Teaching of the Book. The teaching of the book centers around the day of Yahweh, that is, the great crisis in which Yahweh will manifest himself in the destruction of his enemies and the exaltation of his friends. Concerning this day he teaches: (1) Its approach is marked by great convulsions and other extraordinary phenomena in nature.[93] (2) The character of the day will be determined by the attitude of heart and life toward Yahweh. It will be a day of terror to all the people of Judah if they continue in their present

[93] This is implied in the prophet's interpretation of the significance of the calamity that called forth the prophecy, and is definitely stated in 2. 30, 31.

spiritual condition;[94] on the other hand, it may be a day of blessing if they truly repent.[95] (3) When the day finally comes those who call upon the name of Yahweh will be delivered,[96] but the enemies of the people of Yahweh, and, as such, the enemies of Yahweh himself, will be annihilated.[97]

Some of the elements in Joel's teaching concerning the future are found in other prophetic books,[98] but in several important respects he goes beyond them and makes distinctive contributions of his own: (1) He stresses much more than the earlier prophets the outpouring of the divine spirit;[99] (2) Joel sees no salvation for the nations; Israel is to be saved and glorified, the nations are to be judged and destroyed;[100] (3) there is no reference to the Messianic king, who plays such an important part in other prophetic books.[101] When the final crisis arrives it is Yahweh himself who interferes, both in judging the nations and in delivering his children; moreover, it is he who in his own person will rule in Zion.[102] (4) Joel lays great emphasis on the externals of religion,[103] but it is not quite correct to say that he lacks all interest in the fulfillment of the moral requirements of Yahweh religion. He promises deliverance to the people, not on

[94] 1. 15; 2. 11.

[95] 2. 12-14, 19-29.

[96] 2. 31.

[97] Chapter 3.

[98] Compare, for instance, Amos 9. 13; Hos. 2. 21, 22; Isa. 4. 2-6.

[99] 2. 28, 29.

[100] Chapter 3. Even the promise concerning the outpouring of the spirit on *all flesh* is, on closer study, seen to be limited to the Jewish community.

[101] Isa. 9. 6, 7; 11. 1-5; Jer. 33. 15; etc.

[102] 2. 27; 3. 17, 21.

[103] 1. 9, 13, 14; 2. 12-17.

the basis of the painstaking observance of the forms of religion, but only on the basis of a "godly sorrow that worketh repentance for salvation."[104]

3. The Book of Amos

Name and Place in Canon. The name עָמוֹס *'Amōs,* Septuagint Ἀμώς, *'Amôs,* Vulgate, *Amos,* means "burdened," or "burden-bearer." It must not be confused, as was done by the early Greek and Latin fathers, with אָמוֹץ, *'Amōṣ,* the name of the father of Isaiah, which comes from an entirely different root in Hebrew.

Though in the Hebrew Bible the book occupies third place among the Minor Prophets,[1] it may be accepted as settled that Amos is the earliest of the literary prophets.[2] Consequently, the book is of great importance in the study of the religious development of Israel, as a witness to the beliefs current in the eighth century B. C.

Contents and Outline. The book of Amos gives evidence of orderly and systematic arrangement, on the basis of a logical rather than chronological grouping of the utterances. In broad outline the development of the thought is as follows: The book opens with *threats* of judgment against six non-Israelitish nations, against Judah, and especially, against Israel. These are followed by a presentation of the *reasons* for the judgment and five visions of the *execution* of the judgment. After a brief reference to the *effects* of the judgment upon both godly and ungodly, the book closes with a description of

[104] Compare, especially, **2. 12, 13.**

[1] In the Septuagint it occupies second place, following Hosea.

[2] A few relatively short passages are dated slightly earlier by some, namely, Isa. 2. 2-4 and Isa. 15. 1 to 16. 12. See vol. I, pp. 129–132 and pp. 144–149.

the *exaltation and glory* of the remnant that will escape the judgment.

The book falls naturally into three divisions: Chapters 1 and 2, which are in the nature of a prologue; chapters 3 to 6, a series of discourses; and chapters 7 to 9, a series of visions, interrupted by a piece of narrative and short remarks on the same subjects as are discussed in chapters 3 to 6.

Title: Origin of the book. (1. 1.)

I. The Prologue: *The Approaching Judgment* (1. 2 to 2. 16).

Preface: Yahweh's terrible manifestation (1. 2).

1. Sins and punishments of six non-Israelitish nations (1. 3 to 2. 3).
   - (1) Syria (1. 3-5).
   - (2) Philistia (1. 6-8).
   - (3) Phœnicia (1. 9, 10).
   - (4) Edom (1. 11, 12).
   - (5) Ammon (1. 13-15).
   - (6) Moab (2. 1-3).
2. Sin and punishment of Judah (2. 4, 5).
3. Sin and punishment of Israel (2. 6-16).
   - (1) Israel's sins (2. 6-8).
   - (2) Yahweh's care (2. 9-12).
   - (3) Imminent judgment (2. 13-16).

II. Discourses of Warning and Exhortation (3. 1 to 6. 14).

1. Condemnation of the ruling classes (3. 1 to 4. 3).
   - (1) Failure to recognize responsibility brings punishment (3. 1, 2).
   - (2) The prophet's authority (3. 3-8).
   - (3) Summons of the surrounding nations to testify against Israel (3. 9, 10).
   - (4) Sentence of doom (3. 11-15).
   - (5) Heartless luxury and self-indulgence of the noble ladies (4. 1-3).
2. Israel's failure to understand the divine judgments (4. 4-13).
   - (1) Mistaken religious zeal (4. 4, 5).

(2) Seven unheeded chastisements (4. 6-11).
a. Famine (4. 6).
b. Drought (4. 7, 8).
c. Blasting and mildew (4. 9a).
d. Locusts (4. 9b).
e. Pestilence (4. 10a).
f. War (4. 10b).
g. Earthquake (4. 11).
(3) Threat of a final destructive blow (4. 12, 13).

3. Addresses containing lamentations, exhortations, reproofs, and threats of ruin (5. 1-17).
(1) Dirge over the downfall of Israel (5. 1-3).
(2) Justification of the judgment; exhortation to repentance (5. 4-10).
(3) Israel's moral depravity demands retribution (5. 11-13).
(4) Renewed exhortations (5. 14, 15).
(5) Imminent doom and universal lamentation (5. 16, 17).

4. Darkness and despair of the day of Yahweh (5. 18-27).
(1) The day of Yahweh a day of calamity and ruin (5. 18-20).
(2) Popular worship an abomination to Yahweh (5. 21-25).
(3) Threat of exile to a far-distant region (5. 26, 27).

5. Woe upon the luxurious, the self-confident, and the proud (6. 1-14).
(1) Condemnation of the self-satisfied, indifferent nobles (6. 1-7).
(2) Extent of the terrible judgment (6. 8-14).

III. Five Visions Picturing the Execution of the Judgment, with Interludes (7. 1 to 9. 15).

1. Three related visions (7. 1-9).
(1) Swarm of locusts (7. 1-3).
(2) Devouring fire (7. 4-6).
(3) Master builder with the plumb line (7. 7-9).

2. Historical section: Experience of Amos at Bethel (7. 10-17).

3. Fourth vision: Basket of summer fruit (8. 1-3).

4. Explanatory discourse (8. 4-14).
(1) Greedy merchants (8. 4-6).
(2) Figurative description of the impending judgment, and the resulting lamentation (8. 7-10).
(3) Some effects of the judgment (8. 11-14).
a. Eagerness for the word of Yahweh (8. 11, 12).

b. Destruction of the beauty and strength of the nation (8. 13. 14).

5. Fifth vision: Smitten sanctuary (9. 1-6).
6. Yahweh not a respecter of race, but of character (9. 7-10).
7. The epilogue: Promises of a brighter future (9. 11-15).
   (1) Restoration of the Davidic dynasty (9. 11).
   (2) Conquest of the surrounding nations (9. 12).
   (3) Extraordinary fertility of the soil (9. 13).
   (4) Return and reestablishment of the exiles (9. 14, 15).

Controverted passages. Until the latter part of the nineteenth century no doubts were expressed concerning the integrity of the book of Amos. Thus, Ewald said: "This little book forms a whole complete in itself and left Amos' hands just as we have it. The heading alone is probably from another, but in any case from an early, hand."[3] Duhm, in 1875, questioned the authenticity of 2. 4, 5; 4. 13; 5. 8, 9; 9. 5, 6, on the ground that these passages interrupt the connection.[4] Nearly all commentators who have written since the publication of Duhm's doubts have rejected more or less extensive portions of the book as later interpolations. Wellhausen added to the passages questioned by Duhm;[5] Cheyne, in his earlier writings,[6] rejected about twenty verses, which number he later raised to over thirty.[7] The reasons given are, in part, theological, as in the case of 1. 2; 2. 4, 5; 4. 13; 5. 8, 9; 9. 5, 6, 8-15; in part, historical, as in the case of 1. 6-12; 6. 2. Abruptness in transition is urged against some passages, and, as in the case of

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[3] *Die Propheten des Alten Bundes*, I, p. 121. Hitzig also seems to have been convinced that there are no interpolations in the book.

[4] *Die Theologie der Propheten*, p. 119.

[5] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, pp. 67ff.

[6] See introduction to W. R. Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. xv-xvii.

[7] *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Amos."

Hosea,[8] all references to Judah are thought by many to be out of place in a prophecy directed against the northern kingdom. Driver, after examining the objections urged against 2. 4, 5; 4. 13; 5. 8, 9; 9. 5, 6, 8-15, reaches the conclusion that the arguments are in no case convincing.[9] G. A. Smith rejects 9. 8-15 and suspects the verses questioned by Duhm, as well as 1. 11, 12; 5. 14, 15; 6. 2; 8. 13.[10] Taylor declares, "There is good reason for thinking that the following passages are later additions: 1. 1, 2; 2. 4, 5; 4. 13; 5. 8, 9; 6. 2; 9. 5, 8-15."[11] Nowack rejects 1. 11, 12; 2. 4, 5, 15b, 16a; 3. 14b; 4. 12b, 13; 5. 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 26; 6. 2, 9, 10; 7. 1b; 8. 6, 8, 11, 12; 9. 5, 6, 8-15.[12] Marti, who questions more passages than any other writer, rejects: (1) all references to Judah, 2. 4, 5; 3. 1b; 6. 1 in part; (2) certain historical additions, 1. 6-12; 2. 10, 12; 5. 25, 26; 6. 2; (3) theological glosses, 1. 2; 3. 7; 4. 13; 5. 8, 9, 13; 8. 8, 11-14; 9. 5, 6; (4) the Messianic promise, 9. 8-15; (5) some expressions and phrases of minor importance, for example, in 3. 3; 4. 7.[13] Harper considers as secondary 1. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12; 2. 4, 5, 12; 4. 7b, 8a, 13a, d; 5. 8, 9, 18b, 22b; 6. 2, 9-11a; 7. 1d, 8a; 8. 2a, 6, 11a; 9. 5, 6, 8c, 9-15.[14]

The authenticity of many of these passages can be considered only in connection with a detailed exegetical study; however, there are several passages which are re-

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[8] See above, p. 359.
[9] *Joel and Amos*, pp. 117-124.
[10] *The Minor Prophets*, I, p. 61.
[11] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Amos."
[12] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, p. 117.
[13] *Das Dodekapropheton*, pp. 151, 152.
[14] *Amos and Hosea*, p. cxxxii.

jected with such persistency that they deserve more extended discussion here. These passages are, 1. 6-12; 2. 4, 5; 4. 13; 5. 8, 9; 9. 5, 6 and 9. 8-15.

Several recent writers agree in rejecting 1. 9-12, to which verses Marti adds 1. 6-8. Wellhausen, one of the first to question the oracle against Phœnicia, in 1. 9, 10, advances three reasons: (1) The indictment against Tyre is the same as that against Gaza; (2) nothing is said concerning the other Phœnician cities; (3) the closing formula, "saith Yahweh," is lacking. Later writers have added two further objections: (4) The metrical structure is different from that of the preceding oracles; (5) if the geographical order prevailed as elsewhere from north to south, verses 9, 10 would have to precede 6-8. The prophecy against Edom, in 1. 11, 12, is rejected by Wellhausen on the following grounds: (1) It is strange that Amos says nothing about Sela, the capital of Edom, while he names Bozrah and Teman. The latter take the place of the former only in exilic and postexilic literature. (2) In the days of Amos Israel had no ground for complaint against Edom; the latter had suffered far more from the former than *vice versa*. A change came at the time of the exile. (3) The description of Edom's crime is more vague than in the undoubted sections. To these objections Harper adds (4) the similarity of structure with other doubtful passages, 1. 9, 10; 2. 4, 5. Marti rejects 1. 6-8[15] chiefly because Gath is not mentioned among the cities of Philistia; which silence, he thinks, presupposes the destruction of Gath. Now, since the city was not destroyed until 711,

[15] Cheyne, in *Critica Biblica*, rejects verse 8, because it is out of harmony with his Yerachmeelite theory.

1. 6-8 cannot be earlier than 711, which is later than the death of Amos.[16]

Some of these objections are not without weight; at the same time, it must be admitted that they are by no means conclusive, and that several considerations may be urged which tend to weaken their force. In reply to Marti's objection it may be said that the dependence of Amos 1. 6-8 upon Joel is by no means certain,[17] and that the silence concerning Gath may be explained without assuming its destruction.[18] Questions may be raised also regarding the objections urged, with greater persistency, against 1. 9-12: (1) Why must Amos express all his denunciations in the same metrical form? (2) How can we know that Amos intended to follow the geographical order? (3) Must Amos use in every case the closing formula, "saith Yahweh"? (4) Is the indictment against Tyre *identical* with the indictment against Gaza? Why may not the two cities have been guilty of similar crimes? (5) Why must Amos name all the cities of Phœnicia? Tyre being the most prominent city, was not a reference to it sufficient?[19] (6) While Edom's attitude at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, in 586 B. C., would explain the language of 1. 11,[20] is it not true that at all times the feeling between Israel and Edom was very far from being cordial?[21] (7) Sela was never

[16] The similarity of Amos 1. 6-10 with Joel 3. 4-6 leads him to believe that the verses in Amos are dependent on Joel; consequently, he makes the Amos passage even later than Joel, whom he dates about 400 B. C.

[17] See above, pp. 395, 396.

[18] See comment on 1. 8 in F. C. Eiselen, *The Minor Prophets*, p. 228.

[19] Kerioth is the only city in Moab that is named; Rabbah the only city in Ammon.

[20] Compare, for instance, Obad. 10-14; Psa. 137. 7.

[21] The fault was not always with Israel; compare Num. 20. 14-21; 2 Kings 8. 20-22.

superseded by Bozrah or Teman as the capital city of Edom; hence, if in exilic or postexilic days Bozrah and Teman might be mentioned as representative cities of Edom in the place of the capital, why not in the eighth century?[22]

The most complete summary of the arguments against 2. 4, 5 is found in W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*:[23] (1) The similarity in form puts the section into the same category with 1. 9, 10 and 1. 11, 12, and any doubt which attaches to these oracles must attach also to this. (2) The introduction of this oracle removes entirely the force of the surprise which the Israelites would have felt. (3) It is impossible to believe that Amos would have treated Judah so cursorily, and in a manner so like that in which he treated other nations. (4) The terms of Judah's sin are of a Deuteronomic character and of later origin. (5) The style is tame, vague, and weak. (6) The term "Israel" in 2. 6-16 includes Judah.[24] (7) The concluding formula, "saith Yahweh," is lacking. (8) The sin described as transgression of the "instruction" and the "statutes" of Yahweh is too indefinite, not so flagrant as to call for its introduction in this place; in fact, unlike any charges made elsewhere by Amos, and out of harmony with the formula "for . . . transgressions," since it cannot be specified as one of the three or four.

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[22] It should be noted that Sela is mentioned but rarely in the prophetic writings (Isa. 16. 1; 42. 11), if at all. Cheyne considers the word always a common noun, and insists that no city bearing the name is mentioned in the Old Testament. If this is true, the objection vanishes; whether it is true or not, Sela may have been selected as the capital because of its location (Obad. 3), though Edom had other more prominent cities.

[23] P. 44.

[24] Implied, for instance, in 2. 10.

A few brief remarks on these objections may suffice: (1) The objections against 1. 9-12 have been considered in the preceding paragraphs. (2) The naming of Judah makes an appropriate transition from the surrounding nations to Israel. (3) Amos claims to have been sent to Israel;[25] hence there is no more reason for dealing at length with Judah than with the other nations. On the other hand, complete silence concerning Judah would be strange in a citizen of the southern kingdom.[26] (4) The resemblance with Deuteronomy is not very close. (5) The indictment was specific enough to serve the prophet's purpose; he was interested in presenting specific charges only against Israel. (6) Does *Israel* in 2. 6-16 include Judah? How else could the prophet have conveniently expressed himself, had he desired to confine himself to the northern kingdom? (7) Were this a later insertion, it is almost beyond doubt that an imitator would have added the closing formula.[27]

Amos 4. 13; 5. 8, 9; 9. 5, 6 are similar in character and import and may be considered together. The objections urged against these passages are chiefly three: (1) The logical connection between the verses rejected and their contexts is said to be uncertain.[28] (2) A second objection is stated by G. A. Smith in these words: "Such ejaculations in praise of Yahweh's creative power are not elsewhere met with in Hebrew prophecy before the time of the exile."[29] (3) A third objection, which appeals to

[25] Amos 7. 15.

[26] The charges brought against Judah are corroborated by Isa. 2. 6-8, 18, 20; 5. 7-24; for the phraseology compare also Exod. 18. 16.

[27] Here, as in 1. 10, 12, the omission may be due to copyists.

[28] For instance, 4. 12 is said to form a natural conclusion, verse 13 adding nothing to the utterance.

[29] *The Minor Prophets*, I, p. 202.

the author just quoted as the strongest, is stated by him in these words:[30] "*Yahweh is his name* (which occurs in two passages) or *Yahweh of hosts is his name* (which occurs in at least one) is a construction which does not happen elsewhere in the book, except in a verse where it is awkward, and where we have already seen reason to doubt its genuineness.[31] But still more, the phrase does not occur in any other prophet till we come down to the oracles which compose Isa. 40 to 66."[32] Later writers who reject the passages have added no new arguments with which to substantiate their position. Are these arguments conclusive? (1) Does the fact that a passage may be omitted without disturbing the context constitute a sufficient reason for denying its originality? (2) Is it true that 4. 13 is without significance? If it does nothing else, it at least serves to secure a reverent hearing for the prophetic message.[33] A similar explanation may be given in the case of 9. 5, 6,[34] but in the case of 5. 8, 9 the difficulties are greater, for there verse 10 seems to be the natural continuation of verse 7.[35] (3) It is true that similar ejaculations occur more frequently in exilic and postexilic literature,[36] but is this sufficient reason for denying the verses to Amos? Is it unthinkable that a prophet whose heart was deeply moved should burst forth

[30] G. A. Smith, *The Minor Prophets*, I, p. 204.

[31] Amos 5. 27.

[32] The expression occurs eight times in Jeremiah, but Smith thinks that in all cases it is due to later interpolation.

[33] Serves the same purpose as 3. 2-8.

[34] Harper is hardly justified in calling the connection of 9. 5 with the preceding verses, as suggested above, unnatural and far-fetched.

[35] Some possible solutions of the problem are suggested in the comments on these verses in F. C. Eiselen, *The Minor Prophets*, p. 255; the difficulties are very real.

[36] Isa. 40. 22; 42. 5; 44. 24; Job 9. 8, 9; etc.

in sublime doxologies? Moreover, the verses are in the style and spirit of Amos and, as has been pointed out, they serve an important purpose. (4) The use of the divine titles and the construction of the clauses cannot be regarded as conclusive arguments, for similar titles are found in passages generally admitted to be genuine, and the construction is not necessarily late. Perhaps it is best to heed the caution of G. A. Smith: "A case which has failed to convince critics like Robertson Smith and Kuenen cannot be considered conclusive, and we are so ignorant of the conditions of prophetic oratory at this period that dogmatism is impossible."[37]

The authenticity of 9. 8-15, which portrays the glories of an ideal future, has been questioned as persistently as that of any other portion of Amos. Underlying the specific objections against the verses is the assumption that the preexilic period did not know the Messianic hope.[38] Leaving aside this general assumption, which has been considered in another connection,[39] attention may here be given to the more specific objections urged against the verses:[40] (1) Much stress is placed on the alleged linguistic affinities between these verses and admittedly exilic and postexilic writings. (2) The sentiment of 9. 8-15 is said to be foreign to Amos; everywhere else he predicts utter destruction, here a bright future; such abrupt change would weaken his message of warning and doom. (3) Some scholars have urged that a promise to

[37] *The Minor Prophets*, I, p. 205.

[38] Compare H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*, p. 338: "In the exile, therefore, we must locate the beginnings of what we may call the Messianic hope."

[39] For a full discussion of this assumption see vol. I, pp. 137–139.

[40] Some scholars reject only verses 11-15; but verse 10 can hardly be regarded as the conclusion of the prophecy.

Judah has no place in a prophecy intended for Israel. (4) In view of the pronounced ethical note in the message of Amos, the emphasis laid upon material blessings, so prominent in verses 11-15, to the exclusion of moral characteristics, is thought to militate against the genuineness of the verses. (5) Amos is said always to represent the whole people as the object of punishment, while these verses make a distinction between the righteous and the sinner, which is claimed to be characteristic of later thought. (6) Verses 11, 14, 15 seem to presuppose that the awful calamity was a fact of history when the promises were made. (7) Some scholars discover echoes of later writings in the passage.[41]

On the face of it the case against the verses seems to be conclusive. At the same time, some scholars believe that some weighty considerations may be urged against the conclusiveness of these objections: (1) The linguistic peculiarities[42] may be explained as due to a change in subject matter. Says Driver: "The aggregation of expressions otherwise, for the most part, occurring first in Jeremiah and later writers is, no doubt, remarkable: in themselves, however, the phrases used are not linguistically suggestive of lateness; and the question is whether, it being granted that Amos might have contemplated (like other prophets) not only the exile of his people, but also its restoration, they do more than give expression to that idea under forms which might have naturally presented themselves to him."[43] (2) It is by no means

[41] Compare, for instance, verse 11 with Isa. 11. 1; 13a with Lev. 26. 5; 13b with Joel 3. 18; etc.

[42] For a list of these peculiarities see S. R. Driver, *Joel and Amos*, p. 122. R. W. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, p. 195; T. K. Cheyne, *Expositor*, January, 1897, pp. 46, 47.

[43] *Joel and Amos*, p. 122.

certain that the sentiment expressed in 9. 8-15 is foreign to Amos: *a*. The promises held out are not for all. Verses 8-10 state positively that only a remnant shall be saved, while "the sinners of my people shall die by the sword." How can a promise intended only for the faithful weaken Amos's message of judgment? Must it not, rather, prove an encouragement to the faithful and an incentive to some of the "sinners" to cast their lot with the righteous? *b*. It is not true that hope is held out nowhere else in the book. The possibility of a remnant being preserved is recognized in 5. 15;[44] a similar hope is expressed in 7. 2, 5. *c*. Chapter 9. 7 cannot be the conclusion of the book or of a discourse; verse 8a, retained by Harper, furnishes a more suitable close, but it does not follow, therefore, that 8b-15 should be rejected.[45] (3) The objection that a promise intended for Judah has no place in a book written for Israel rests upon a misapprehension. The promise is not for Judah, but for the "kernel" preserved out of the sinful kingdom, Israel. True, the exaltation is connected with the dynasty of David, but the son of Jesse occupies a prominent place in the hopes concerning the future, from the time of his glorious reign to the end of the Old Testament period. (4) The objection based on the emphasis laid upon material blessings might hold good of verses 11-15 taken by themselves, but not of verses 8-15, for in verses 8-10 the ethical note is very pronounced; the material blessings are promised only to the righteous nucleus which, because of its righteousness,

[44] True, 5. 15 is rejected by some, but on insufficient grounds, the chief reason being that its testimony is troublesome.

[45] The subject resolves itself into the more general question as to whether all Messianic predictions represent later attempts to modify the severity of the earlier prophets. Proof to sustain this position is still wanting. See vol. I, pp. 137–139.

escapes the judgment. Material prosperity is an essential element in the Messianic hope from beginning to end. (5) It is true that Amos always represents the whole people as the object of punishment; and this is the case in verses 8-10; but is it reasonable to believe that Amos, with his lofty conception of Yahweh as a God of righteousness, would expect the effects of the judgment to be the same in all cases? Is it not more reasonable to believe that a prophet of righteousness and a God of righteousness would recognize the distinction implied in these verses? (6) Do verses 11, 14, 15 imply the exile as a fact of history? In this connection much is made of verse 11, which, it is claimed, presupposes the fall of the Davidic dynasty in 586 B. C. In reply the following considerations may be urged: *a.* The Hebrew permits the reference to a future overthrow of the dynasty of David. *b.* Jeremiah and Ezekiel, whose denunciations were as severe as those of Amos, and whose conviction that Judah and Jerusalem would fall was unwavering, did not hesitate to draw the brightest pictures of the restoration, even while the destruction of the city was still in the future. *c.* Even in the days of Amos the dynasty of David had lost much of its former splendor. Well might the prophet wish for a restoration "as in the days of old." The division subsequent to the death of Solomon robbed Judah and the dynasty of David of much prestige and power and was greatly deplored by Isaiah;[46] moreover, only a generation before Amos, Judah had suffered serious humiliation.[47] (6) The similarities between Amos and other writings are not of such a nature that definite inferences regarding priority and date can be drawn.

[46] Isa. 7. 17.

[47] 2 Kings 14. 13, 14.

Evidently, no dogmatic assertions are justified. No doubt the passage presents some peculiarities, but they are not sufficiently numerous or decisive to have convinced all scholars that the verses must be denied to Amos. Some of the chief difficulties would vanish completely if we could assume that these verses were not a part of the message delivered at Bethel, but were added when Amos or his immediate disciples put the prophecies in writing and prepared them for a wider circle.[48]

The internal history of the book of Amos is exceedingly simple: (1) About the middle of the eighth century B. C. Amos delivered at Bethel a series of prophecies against the kingdom of Israel; (2) The substance of these discourses, reduced to poetic form, and certain biographical material were combined into the present book of Amos, either by Amos himself or by his immediate disciples. (3) In the course of transmission minor glosses and explanatory notes were added, and some expansions took place; but these did not seriously affect the original book, which has come down to the present practically in the form it assumed in the eighth century B. C.[49]

Times of Amos. According to 1. 1,[50] Amos prophesied

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[48] Few of the passages considered at length can be denied with any degree of assurance to the eighth-century prophet; but there are numerous words, phrases, and clauses, which are in the nature of later glosses and expansions; but these can be studied only in connection with a detailed exegetical study.

[49] Those who deny more extensive sections to Amos hold much more complicated views of the internal history of the book. For several such views see W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, pp. cxxxiii-cxxxvi.

[50] The title is undoubtedly a later addition, but "whatever may be the age of the superscription, it is entirely consistent with the contents of the book and is to be accepted as historical."

(1) while Jeroboam was king of Israel and Uzziah king of Judah,[51] and (2) two years before the earthquake.[52] The date may, perhaps, be fixed more definitely by inference from 2 Kings 14. 25 and Amos 6. 14; for a comparison of the two passages suggests that the conquests of Jeroboam had already taken place when Amos arose. Furthermore, the tone of the entire book suggests that the evil consequences of the prosperity resulting from the successful undertakings of Jeroboam had made themselves already felt when Amos entered upon his prophetic career. It seems safe, therefore, to place the activity of Amos after the middle of Jeroboam's reign, or, not far from 750 B. C.[53]

The period in which Amos arose was one of great external prosperity. The nation had but recently recovered from a state of extreme depression. During the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz it had suffered from the Syrians so severely[54] that it seemed on the very verge of destruction. But under the successor of Jehoahaz, namely, Joash or Jehoash, the fortunes of Israel began

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[51] According to this note, the ministry of Amos falls between 782 and 741 B. C., for the longest possible reign that may be ascribed to Uzziah covers approximately 789-740 B. C., that of Jeroboam II, 782-741 B. C. That Jeroboam was still upon the throne is implied in 7. 9, 10.

[52] This earthquake is spoken of also in Zech. 14. 5, as having occurred in the days of Uzziah, but its exact date is not known.

[53] A date in the late postexilic period has been suggested (*American Journal of Semitic Languages*, xviii, pp. 66-93); also a date during the early part of Josiah's reign, between 638 and 621 B. C. (Elhorst, *De Prophetie van Amos*). A date after the accession of Tiglath-pileser IV, in 745 B. C. is suggested on the ground that during the twenty-five years prior to that date Assyria was so inactive that it could not have inspired Amos' utterances (Wildeboer, *Einleitung*, p. 110). However, the date suggested above is the most probable.

[54] 2 Kings 10. 32, 33; 13. 3, 7.

to turn.[55] The successes continued under Jeroboam II, who became a "saviour" of Israel,[56] recovered all the territory that had been lost, and extended the borders of Israel in every direction.[57] As a result of these successes in war, the revival of commerce, and the rapid development of internal resources, Israel rose to a pitch of power and prosperity greater than the nation had enjoyed since the division of the kingdom.

The book of Amos presents a vivid picture of this prosperity. The luxury of the rich, made possible by increased wealth, met the eyes of the simple herdsman on every hand. The palaces built of hewn stone,[58] some of them paneled with ivory,[59] the pretentious summer residences and winter residences,[60] the extravagant interior finish,[61] all were to him evidence that the former simplicity and stability were threatened with extinction. He could not avoid seeing or hearing the drunken revelries;[62] nor could he be blind to the mad extravagance which found satisfaction only in possessing the choicest and best of everything, the chief oils, the most delicate meats, the best music.[63] The sanctuaries shared in the general prosperity. The chief sanctuary at Bethel was under royal patronage[64] and was thronged with worshipers;[65] other sanctuaries were diligently visited;[66] offerings and tithes were brought regularly and in abun-

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[55] 2 Kings 13. 25. In part these victories were due to the fact that at this time the forces of Syria were needed for the defense of their homeland against the Assyrians in the southeast.

[56] 2 Kings 14. 27.

[57] 2 Kings 14. 23-29.

[58] Amos 5. 11.

[59] 3. 15.

[60] 3. 15.

[61] 3. 12; 6. 4.

[62] 6. 5, 6.

[63] 6. 5, 6.

[64] 7. 13.

[65] 9. 1.

[66] 4. 4; 5. 5; 8. 14.

dance;[67] feasts were celebrated enthusiastically and with all possible pomp.[68]

A nation so prosperous and so zealous in the fulfillment of its religious obligations might well be called blessed. But the prophet was not deceived by the superficial prosperity. He saw the dark side of the national life with equal clearness. The wealth and luxury of the rich were obtained by violence and robbery,[69] by oppression of the poor and needy, who were driven into actual slavery by their cruel creditors,[70] by dishonest trading, in which every possible advantage was taken of the unsuspecting buyer,[71] by exacting presents and bribes.[72] Women were no better than men; to satisfy their appetites they urged their husbands to greater cruelties.[73] The corruption of the courts of justice was notorious;[74] the poor could get no equitable hearing, and justice was bought and sold.[75] Immorality was practiced without shame.[76] Tradesmen were impatient at the interruption of their greedy pursuits by the sacred days.[77] Humane feelings were smothered.[78] The political leaders, who should have been the protectors and guardians of the people, were the leaders in vice and crime,[79] and were indifferent to the "affliction of Joseph."[80] Those who attempted to reprove the wrong and uphold the right were despised and abhorred.[81]

With this flagrant disregard of all human and divine

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[67] 4. 4, 5.
[68] 5. 21-23.
[69] 9. 10.
[70] 2. 6, 7; 8. 6.
[71] 8. 4-6.
[72] 5. 11, 12.
[73] 4. 1.
[74] 5. 7, 10, 12; 6. 12.
[75] 5. 12.
[76] 2. 7.
[77] 8. 5.
[78] 2. 8.
[79] 6. 1-6.
[80] 6. 6.
[81] 5. 10; 7. 10-13.

law there went, strangely enough, a feeling of absolute security and self-righteousness. The great mass of people believed that in view of their painstaking observance of the external ceremonial they had a claim on the divine favor, and that Yahweh was bound to be with them and protect them from all harm.[82] This deplorable religious, social, and moral condition was all due, in the thought of the prophet, to a false conception of the character of Yahweh; hence his persistent effort to give to his hearers a more adequate knowledge of their God.[83]

The Prophet. In the midst of the social abuses, the moral corruption, and the religious self-contentment described in the preceding paragraphs the message of Amos fell like a thunderbolt. Who was this brave and fearless representative of righteousness and justice? The book bearing his name is the only source of information regarding his personal life. The place of his birth is not known; his home was Tekoa,[84] which has been sought in different parts of Palestine,[85] but is undoubtedly to be identified with the modern *Tekū'a,* on the high ground of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem and six miles south of Bethlehem. Amos was not a prophet by education or profession, nor did he enter the prophetic office by way of the prophetic guilds.[86] His occupation

[82] 5. 14.

[83] Says A. B. Davidson: "When men corrupt the image of God in their hearts, they forthwith proceed to the debasing of themselves and to such enmity and strife that the bonds of society are wholly broken" (*Biblical and Literary Essays*, p. 138).

[84] 1. 1.

[85] In the territory of Zebulon (Pseudepiphanius, *De vitis prophetarum*, 243); in Asher (Kimchi); in the south of Palestine but in territory belonging to the northern kingdom (Cyril; among moderns, Cheyne); the same as Eltekeh, Josh. 19. 44 (Graetz), etc.

[86] Amos 7. 14.

was that of a herdsman[87] and a dresser of sycomore[88] trees.[89] Both occupations were rather humble.[90] It was while he was following his daily occupation that the divine call reached him, but it did not find him unprepared.[91] He belonged to the "right-minded minority"

[87] 1. 1; 7. 14. In the former passage the Hebrew has *nōḳēdh*, that is, the keeper of a certain species of sheep called among the Arabs *nakad*. The same term is applied to king Mesha of Moab, in 2 Kings 3. 4, where it is translated "sheep master." The Hebrew *bōḳēr*, "tender of cattle," in 7. 14, may be a corruption from an original *nōḳēdh*, the two words resembling each other quite closely in Hebrew.

[88] The sycomore does not grow at as high a level as Tekoa, which fact has been urged against identifying the home of Amos with Tekoa in Judah. There is, however, no necessity for supposing that his sycomore trees were right in Tekoa or in the immediate neighborhood of the town. The groves may have been located in the lower parts to the east or southeast, where a milder temperature prevailed.

[89] The Hebrew is *bōlēs shiḳemīm*, meaning literally, "one who handles the fig-shaped fruit of the sycomore." The fruit of the Palestinian sycomore, or fig-mulberry tree, grows on little sprigs rising directly out of the stem, in clusters like grapes. It is like a small fig in shape and size, but insipid and woody in taste. It is infected with a small insect, and, unless the fruit is punctured to allow the insect to escape, does not become edible. With the insect escapes a bitter juice, whereupon the fruit ripens and becomes edible, though never very palatable.

[90] Amos may have owned the flocks and trees, in whole or in part, but the statement that he "followed the flock," in 7. 14, indicates that he was not a wealthy sheep master, though he may have been sufficiently prosperous to employ an assistant during his absence at Bethel. The language of the prophecy and the favorite figures bear witness that Amos was a countryman, accustomed to life in the open air (2. 13; 3. 4, 5, 12; 4. 2, 13; 5. 8; 6. 12; 7. 1-3; 9. 5, 6, 9; etc.).

[91] While Amos was of humble origin, he was not an "unlettered rustic," as may be seen both from his knowledge of history and society (see further, below, p. 427), and the excellence of his literary style. True, Jerome called the prophet "rude in speech," but since the days of Jerome many scholars have expressed their admiration for the strength and purity of Amos' literary style. In the words of Driver: "The style of Amos possesses high literary merit. His language... is pure, his syntax is idiomatic, his sentences are smoothly constructed and clear" (*Joel and Amos*, p. 115).

which, in spite of all influences to the contrary, retained its faith in and loyalty to Yahweh. With an open mind and quickened conscience he undoubtedly often meditated upon the things of God, as he dwelt in the solitude of the desert. Accustomed to the simpler life of the herdsman, he felt more keenly the extravagance, luxury, and corruption of the aristocracy. Compelled to defend himself and his flock against the dangers of the desert, he did not easily shrink from the dangers confronting a prophet of Yahweh. Carefully watching every shadow and noise, not knowing how soon a wild beast would rush upon him from the apparent quietness, he readily developed the vigilance and power of discernment which kept him from being deceived by the superficial piety and prosperity of his countrymen.

The part played by the lonely shepherd life of Amos in his preparation for the prophetic office cannot be overestimated. But Amos did not receive his training exclusively in the solitude of the desert. "As a wool grower Amos must have had his yearly journeys among the markets of the land; and to such were probably due his opportunities for familiarity with northern Israel, the originals of his vivid pictures of her town life, her commerce, and her worship at the great sanctuaries. . . . By road and market he would meet with men of other lands. Phœnician pedlars, or Canaanites as they were called, . . . men of Moab. . . . Aramæan hostages, Philistines, who held the export trade to Egypt —these Amos must have met and may have talked with; their dialects scarcely differed from his own."[92] To these scenes, observations, and interviews Amos brought

[92] G. A. Smith, *The Minor Prophets*, I, pp. 79, 80.

from the desert a penetrating vision, a quickened conscience, and keen powers of discernment.

Thus prepared and trained in the school of life, Amos heard the voice of Yahweh. He left his flocks and sycomore groves and journeyed to Bethel, the religious center of the northern kingdom. There under the shadow of the royal sanctuary he delivered his messages of warning and exhortation. How long his ministry continued is not known. Finally Amaziah, the chief priest, accused the prophet of treason and bade him return to his own home and make a living there. Amos stood his ground, defended his action, and repeated his message of judgment. Of the prophet's later life nothing is known. In view of the well-planned disposition of the book it is reasonable to suppose that after completing his prophetic ministration he returned to Tekoa, resumed his former occupation, and at his leisure arranged or supervised the arrangement of his orally delivered discourses.[93]

Teaching of Amos. The significance of Amos and the other eighth-century prophets in the development of Yahweh religion cannot easily be overestimated. During that century the religion of Yahweh was confronted by two serious dangers: (1) The moral and religious corruption, to which attention has already been called; (2) the successes of the Assyrians, which to the great mass of people were an evidence of the superiority of the Assyrian deities, and might lead to apostasy from Yahweh. The fundamental need of the hour was a

[93] A late Christian tradition, whose origin is obscure, asserts that Amos was frequently struck by Amaziah, and that finally he was fatally wounded by the latter's son, because the prophet rebuked him for worshiping the "calves," that Amos lived until he reached his own land, died there, and was buried with his fathers. Jerome and Eusebius affirm that in their days the tomb of Amos was shown at Tekoa.

statement or restatement, on the one hand, of the true nature and character of Yahweh, and, on the other, of the proper relation of Yahweh to Israel and to the surrounding nations. Amos and his contemporaries in the prophetic office supplied this demand: They pointed out that Yahweh is a righteous and holy God, that the nation is guilty in his sight, that his very character compels him to punish them, that he is using the Assyrians as an instrument of scourging. The emphasis on the divine righteousness and holiness was intended to counteract the internal religious danger, while the emphasis on Yahweh's control of the Assyrians was to show that the victories of the Assyrians did not prove the superiority of their deities, but on the contrary, the unique power and supremacy of Yahweh.

Amos was the first of the four eighth-century prophets to redefine the Yahweh concept, and with him opened an era of constructive thinking hardly surpassed in any other period of human history.[94] Nevertheless, it is not quite correct to say that Amos "marks an *entirely new* departure in the religious history of Israel"—in other words, that he is the founder of Yahwism in Israel. Amos regards himself, not as an innovator, but as a reformer. He assumes that the people might have known Yahweh and his will, for he represents their wrongdoing not as the result of intellectual ignorance but of stubbornness of heart.[95] He is not conscious of preaching a

[94] Cornill is right in saying: "Amos is one of the most wonderful appearances in the history of the human spirit" (*Prophets of Israel*, p. 42). Similarly, G. A. Smith: "The Book of Amos opens one of the greatest stages in the religious development of mankind" (*The Minor Prophets*, I, p. 73). W. R. Smith calls Amos "the founder of a new type of prophecy" (*Prophets of Israel*, p. 120).

[95] Amos 2. 12.

new faith, but strives to recall the people to allegiance to Yahweh from whom, he believes, they have wandered. Moreover, Amos refers to earlier prophets,[96] whose successor he conceives himself to be. The theological style and terminology of the book also point to a line of earlier prophets; for it is impossible to believe that the fluent prophetic style and fixed religious terminology came from a pioneer in the field of Yahweh religion. A. B. Davidson, speaking of the lofty spiritual and ethical teaching of the eighth-century prophets, says: "It is the perfect efflorescence of a tree whose roots stood in the soil of Israel from the beginning, whose vital energies had always been moving towards flower, and which burst forth at last in the gorgeous blaze of color which we see."[97]

[96] 2. 11; compare 3. 7.

[97] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Prophecy and Prophets." In this connection attention may be directed to Amos' knowledge of the nation's history, laws, and religious practices. As illustrations of the prophet's remarkable familiarity with the early history of the nation may be mentioned Jacob and Esau (1. 11), "Moab shall die with tumult" (2. 2; compare Num. 24. 17), the exodus (2. 10), the wanderings in the desert (2. 10; 5. 25), the stature of the Amorites (2. 9), the fame of David as a musician (6. 5). He is also acquainted with some of the laws of the Pentateuch. In 2. 8 he condemns the breach of the law concerning pledges (Exod. 22. 26); and he accuses Judah of rejecting the law and statutes of Yahweh (2. 4). The existence of a fully developed ceremonial is presupposed. The offering of "leavened" sacrifices is condemned (4. 5), new moons and Sabbaths were observed by abstaining from ordinary labor (8. 5), feasts were kept and solemn assemblies were held (5. 21; 8. 10), sacrifices, burnt offerings, meal offerings, peace offerings, freewill offerings and tithes are mentioned (4. 4, 5; 5. 22). From this familiarity some have inferred that Amos knew the Pentateuch in its present form. Such inference is entirely unwarranted, for not a single statement in the book proves or even implies the existence of the Pentateuch in its present form. One may go further and assert that nothing in the book places it beyond doubt that any part of the Pentateuch was known to Amos in written form. The only thing beyond

The teaching of Amos may conveniently be summarized under two heads: 1. The prophet's conception of Yahweh, the God of Israel; 2. The prophet's conception of Israel, the people of Yahweh.

In the thought of Amos, Yahweh is the only truly great and powerful God. Amos cannot be called a dogmatic monotheist, and yet Marti is correct when he says that "monotheism is present in essence if not in name." Concerning this God Amos teaches (1) that he is a Person: he is capable of every emotion, volition, and activity of which a person is capable. He swears by himself,[98] repents,[99] communicates with others,[100] issues commands,[101] determines upon lines of action,[102] hates and abhors.[103] (2) The great power of Yahweh may be seen in the acts of creation,[104] as also in the continuous control which he exercises over the forces of nature[105] and the nations of the earth.[106] (3) The presence of Yahweh is not limited to Israel; he holds sway over other nations[107] and may pursue his enemies to the

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question is that much of the material now in the Pentateuch was common property in the eighth century B. C. There may have been, and probably were, in existence some historical documents, or some writings of a legal character, from which the prophet gathered his historical and legal information; but the extent and exact contents of these documents cannot be determined from the book of Amos.

[98] 6. 8; compare 4. 2.

[99] 7. 3.

[100] 3. 7.

[101] 9. 3, 4.

[102] 6. 8; 7. 3.

[103] 5. 21, 22; 6. 8.

[104] 4. 13; 5. 8, 9; 9. 6. These verses are denied by some to Amos; see above, pp. 412–414.

[105] 4. 6-11, 13; 5. 8; 8. 9; 9. 5, 6.

[106] 1. 3 to 2. 3; 2. 9-16; 9. 7.

[107] Chapters 1 and 2.

ends of the earth.[108] (4) Yahweh's knowledge is equally extensive; he has no difficulty in discovering the hiding places of the fugitive sinners.[109] (5) Perhaps the most important element is the constant emphasis on Yahweh's righteousness; he takes no delight in superficial and external worship;[110] he deals with all nations, Israel included, according to ethical principles;[111] his supreme demand is, "Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."[112] (6) Only rarely does Amos suggest that Yahweh is a merciful God. Twice he dares to intercede in behalf of the sinful nation,[113] and once he holds out a promise that under certain conditions Yahweh may be gracious unto a remnant of Jacob.[114]

The prophet's teaching concerning Israel is a reflection of, or a deduction from, his teaching concerning Yahweh: (1) Amos is thoroughly convinced that, though Yahweh sustains vital relations to other nations, he has a peculiar interest in Israel; Israel is in a special sense the people of Yahweh.[115] (2) As the people of Yahweh Israel is under obligation to reflect the character of her God; otherwise, intimate fellowship between the two is impossible.[116] (3) In order that Israel may know his will Yahweh has made himself known, through prophets and Nazirites,[117] through the law—to Judah,[118] through Amos,[119] and through the acts of divine providence.[120] The privileges thus granted to Israel involve increased responsibilities and obligations.[121] (4) In spite of the

[108] 9. 2ff.
[109] 9. 2ff.
[110] 4. 4, 5; 5. 21-23.
[111] 3. 1, 2; 7. 7-9; 8. 1-3; 9. 8; etc.
[112] 5. 24.
[113] 7. 2, 5.
[114] 5. 15; questioned by some.
[115] 2. 9, 10; 3. 1, 2.
[116] 3. 2; 5. 4, 24; 6. 14.
[117] 2. 11; 3. 7.
[118] 2. 4.
[119] 3. 8; 7. 15.
[120] 4. 6-11.
[121] 3. 2.

divine interest and care Israel has fallen far short of the divine ideal. Righteousness and justice are trampled under foot,[122] the poor and needy are oppressed,[123] the name of Yahweh is dishonored by the immoral practices connected with the worship;[124] indeed, the whole system of worship is an abomination to Yahweh because it is not practiced in the right spirit, nor backed by a consistent life.[125] (5) A righteous God must execute judgment upon a sinful people.[126] The judgment will take the form of a foreign invasion and consequent exile, which will result in national destruction.[127] (6) From the judgment a faithful remnant will escape.[128] This remnant will form the nucleus of the new kingdom of God, whose rulers will be of the dynasty of David; the surrounding nations will be reconquered, and the soil will be blessed with extraordinary fertility, so that the new nation may dwell in peace and prosperity forever.[129]

4. The Book of Obadiah

Name and Place in Canon. In the Massoretic text the name of the prophet is written עֹבַדְיָה,[1] *'Ōbhadhyāh,* which means "worshiper of Yahweh," and this vocalization is supported by the heading of the book in the *Codex*

[122] 5. 7.

[123] 2. 6, 7; 3. 10; 5. 11, 12.

[124] 2. 7, 8.

[125] 5. 21-23.

[126] 2. 13-16; 3. 14, 15; 9. 8; etc.

[127] 3. 11; 4. 3; 5. 27; 6. 14.

[128] 5. 15; 9. 11. On the authenticity of the promise sections see above, pp. 414–418.

[129] 9. 11-15; see preceding note.

[1] The longer form עֹבַדְיָהוּ is found in the Old Testament and in Semitic inscriptions (Benzinger, *Hebræische Archæologie*, p. 258).

Vaticanus text of the Septuagint, Ὀβδεού. Other manuscripts of the Septuagint favor the Vulgate reading *Abdias,* which presupposes the Hebrew עַבְדִּיָה = עַבְדְּיָהּ, "servant of Yahweh."[2] The suggestion has been made that Obadiah is not a proper name at all,[3] but an appellative noun describing the author simply as a servant or prophet of Yahweh. The frequent occurrence of the name in the Old Testament[4] makes this interpretation improbable, but it must be admitted that nothing is known of the Obadiah who is credited with the writing of this, the shortest book in the Old Testament.[5]

In the Hebrew as in the English Bible the book of Obadiah occupies fourth place; in the Septuagint, fifth place, the order being Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah. Some have thought that the position in the list points to an early date for the prophet, but the position may be due to other than chronological considerations. The collector or collectors of the Minor Prophets may have placed the book after Amos because they regarded it an expansion of the prophecy against Edom in Amos 9. 12,[6] and before Jonah, because they saw in Jonah an illustration of the statement in Obad. 1 regarding an ambassador sent among the nations.

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[2] Compare 1 Chron. 5. 15; 9. 16; Neh. 11. 17.

[3] As in the case of Malachi; see below, p. 591.

[4] Thirteen persons bearing the name "Obadiah" are mentioned in the Old Testament.

[5] The best-known person bearing the name is the minister of Ahab who offered protection to the prophets of Yahweh in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 18. 1-16). Delitzsch thinks that the prophet may be identified with the teacher of the law under Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17. 7); others have identified him with the overseer under Josiah (2 Chron. 34. 12), or with the anonymous prophet under Amaziah (2 Chron. 25. 7), but none of these theories have adquate foundations.

[6] First suggested by Schnurrer, in 1787.

Contents and Outline. The twenty-one verses of the book center around a single theme—the utter destruction of Edom, which will clear the way for the exaltation of the Jews.

Title and Introduction: Edom's hostile purposes against Judah (verse 1).

I. Utter Destruction of Edom (2-16).

1. Announcement of the judgment (2-9).
   (1) Inability of Edom's natural defenses to save her (2-4).
   (2) Completeness of the destruction (5, 6).
   (3) Treachery of her allies (7).
   (4) Failure of Edom's wisdom and might (8, 9).
2. Causes of the judgment (10-14).
   (1) Unbrotherly conduct of Edom toward Judah (10, 11).
   (2) Warning to desist from this conduct (12-14).
3. Terrors of the day of Yahweh (15, 16).

II. Exaltation of the Jews (17-21).

1. Restoration of a remnant (17).
2. Conquest of Edom and other surrounding nations (18-20).
3. Yahweh's universal sway (21).

Unity and Date. The short book of Obadiah presents some very perplexing critical problems. Regarding its unity and date, four distinct views have been held and are still advocated: 1. The book is a unity and preexilic;[7] 2. it is a unity and exilic;[8] 3. it consists of a preexilic prophecy and later, postexilic elements;[9] 4. it consists of two or more portions, all postexilic.[10] Earlier commentators accepted the book as a unity and were inclined to assign it to an early date. The first to question the

[7] Caspari, von Hofmann, Delitzsch, Keil, Kirkpatrick, N. Peters, etc.

[8] For instance, Hitzig and Kent.

[9] Ewald, Kuenen, Cornill, in the first four editions of his *Einleitung*, Wildeboer, Driver, G. A. Smith, Kautzsch, Bewer, etc.

[10] Eichhorn, Wellhausen, Nowack, Cornill, in the fifth edition of his *Einleitung*, Duhm, Gray, Marti, Haupt, etc.

unity of the book was Eichhorn,[11] who dated Obadiah after 586 B. C. and regarded verses 17-21 an appendix from the time of Alexander Jannæus. Ewald suggested that the original prophecy came from a contemporary of Isaiah, and that the present book owed its origin to an exilic prophet who made use of the earlier work. With some important modifications, this continues to be the view of many modern authors. Several recent writers have returned more closely to the view of Eichhorn. Thus Wellhausen, followed by Nowack, Marti, Cornill, Duhm, and others, connects the original prophecy[12] with the fall of Jerusalem, in 586 B. C., and regards the closing verses as a later appendix.[13]

The evidence on the basis of which the problem must be solved may be considered under three heads: (1) The position of the book in the series of Minor Prophets; (2) the historical references and allusions, especially in 11-14; (3) the literary parallels with other Old Testament literature, especially the resemblances between 1-9 and Jer. 49. 7-22.

As has been pointed out, no inference may be drawn from the position of the book in the collection of Minor Prophets, for the arrangement was determined by other than chronological considerations.

The historical references in 11-14 presuppose a capture and devastation of Jerusalem. If the time of this disaster can be determined, the earliest possible date of at least these verses is fixed. Now, the Old Testament records four occasions on which the southern capital

[11] In the fourth edition of his *Einleitung*, 1824.

[12] Consisting of 1-7 + 10-14.

[13] Barton (*Jewish Encyclopædia*, article, "Obadiah") recognizes three parts: (1) a preexilic portion; (2) additions by Obadiah in the early postexilic days; (3) an appendix, probably from Maccabean times.

fell into the hands of foreign invaders: (1) Jerusalem was taken by Shishak of Egypt during the reign of Rehoboam.[14] At that time Edom was subject to Judah and could not have committed the crimes described in these verses; hence this capture is excluded. (2) According to 2 Chron. 21. 16, 17 the city was sacked by Philistines and Arabians. This is the occasion favored by those who believe in the preexilic date of Obadiah; but, even assuming that the Chronicler's account is reliable, it must remain a question whether the calamity which befell Jerusalem at that time was serious enough to justify the strong and vigorous language of Obadiah. (3) The wall of the city was broken down by Jehoash of Israel.[15] This calamity cannot be in the mind of the author, because he would not be justified in calling the Israelites "strangers" and "foreigners."[16] (4) In 586 B. C., the city was plundered and finally destroyed.[17] As a matter of simple fact, the happenings alluded to in Obadiah did not take place in connection with any of the occupations of the city recorded in the Old Testament except the conquest by Nebuchadrezzar in 586 B. C. Consequently, the prophecy should be interpreted as a denunciation of Edom's hostility during the crisis which resulted in the downfall of the kingdom of Judah.[18]

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[14] 1 Kings 14. 25, 26; 2 Chron. 12. 1-12.

[15] 2 Kings 14. 8-14; 2 Chron. 25. 17-24.

[16] Obad. 11.

[17] 2 Kings 24. 10ff.; 2 Chron. 36. 9ff.

[18] True, the historical books do not name the Edomites as taking an active part in the destruction of Jerusalem, but the Old Testament asserts again and again that the Edomites were bitter enemies of Israel, and there is abundant evidence in exilic and postexilic writings that during the closing years of Judah's national history the old hostile spirit flared up. Compare, for instance, Ezek. 25. 12-14, 35. 1-15; Lam. 4. 21; Ps. 137. 7.

The conclusion that the reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. does not determine the date of the prophecy. Before that can be done another question must be considered: Does Obadiah describe an historical event of the past or present or does he predict an event still in the future? Pusey argues emphatically in favor of the predictive interpretation;[19] but his arguments are based on an artificial conception of inspiration and prophecy. Language, context, analogy, and other considerations all combine to make it certain that the prophet is announcing judgment upon Edom for wrongdoings with which he has become familiar during his own lifetime.[20] The historical references in 11-14, therefore, make it quite certain that the prophecy cannot come from a period earlier than 586 B. C.

One of the most perplexing literary problems presented by the book is the question as to the relation of Obadiah 1-9 to Jer. 49. 7-22. No one can read the two passages without being convinced that the marked resemblances cannot be mere coincidence. Hence they must be explained in one of three ways: Either Obadiah borrowed from Jeremiah, or Jeremiah borrowed from Obadiah, or both used, each for his own purpose and in his own way, a common original. Now, linguistic features as well as logical connection have convinced practically all modern scholars that Obadiah presents the more original form

[19] *Minor Prophets*, p. 344.

[20] The statement of Pusey that the events to which the prophet alludes cannot be a thing of the past, "because God does not warn men against sins already committed," rests upon a misapprehension of the purpose of the book. The prophecy is not so much a *warning* as an *announcement of judgment;* its purpose is not so much to prevent new outbreaks as to condemn outrages already committed, though the former purpose is also kept in mind (12-14).

of the oracle, which makes the borrowing of Obadiah from Jeremiah improbable. The second alternative, that Jeremiah borrowed from Obadiah, is not without serious difficulties: (1) In a few places the originality seems to lie with Jeremiah, which would favor the priority of Jeremiah, unless it is assumed that the text of Obadiah suffered after Jeremiah had embodied the original words of Obadiah in his own prophecy. (2) More serious is the fact that Jer. 49. 12 seems to imply that the judgment upon the Jews is still in the future. If so, Jeremiah must have delivered his prophecy before the destruction of the city, which excludes the possibility of his borrowing from an oracle delivered after the fall of Jerusalem. These considerations have led many scholars to accept the third alternative, namely, that both passages are dependent upon an earlier utterance.[21] If Jer. 49. 7-22 in its entirety comes from Jeremiah, this is undoubtedly the most satisfactory explanation. From the facts already indicated it would further follow that Obadiah incorporated the original prophecy with few alterations while Jeremiah treated it with greater freedom, and, perhaps, that Obadiah was familiar not only with the original oracle, but also with the utterance of Jeremiah dependent on the same. If this theory is

[21] The similarity of Jer. 49. 7-22 extends only to Obad. 1-9. It surely would seem peculiar that Jeremiah, with the whole book of Obadiah before him, should confine himself to the first nine verses, when the rest contained much that would have suited his purpose. The differences between Obad. 16 and Jer. 49. 12 are so great that in this case independence seems not improbable. If it seems necessary to assume dependence, it may well be kept in mind that if Jeremiah uttered his oracle about twenty years before Obadiah's appearance, the latter may have been influenced by Jeremiah's words, though for the whole prophecy dependence of Obadiah on Jeremiah seems excluded.

correct, the earlier prophecy must, on the whole,[22] be identical with Obad. 1-9, which section contains no allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. After the fall of the city a prophet appropriated the older utterance and expanded it by adding the references now found in the succeeding verses, imitating in the additions to some extent the language of the earlier oracle.[23] The date and occasion of this early prophecy cannot be definitely determined. Ewald supposed it to have been spoken when Elath was restored to the Edomites,[24] while others place it in the days of Jehoram;[25] but if a relatively early preexilic source is assumed the early years of Amaziah seem to offer a more suitable date.[26] According to this theory, the next step in the development of the book of Obadiah was the use of the preexilic oracle in a bitter denunciation of Edom, soon after the destruction

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[22] Wellhausen and others are inclined to reject 8, 9 as a later interpolation, but there seems no adequate reason for rejecting these verses.

[23] A somewhat different view is held by scholars who deny Jer 49. 7-22 to the prophet Jeremiah. Those who still insist that Obadiah is the original hold that the entire prophecy found a place in Jeremiah in the late postexilic period. However, there seems insufficient reason for denying the whole prophecy to Jeremiah, and a good case may be made for one or two genuine Jeremianic oracles against Edom (see vol. I, p. 270).

[24] 2 Kings 16. 6; margin R. V.

[25] 2 Kings 8. 20-22; 2 Chron. 21. 8–10.

[26] See F. C. Eiselen, *Minor Prophets*, comment on Obad. 1. The writer is no longer satisfied with the view set forth in his commentary. It seems to him now that, on the whole, the view at least hinted at in the chapter on Jeremiah (see vol. I, pp. 269, 270) offers the most probable solution of the problem: One or two prophecies against Edom originated with Jeremiah; another prophecy against the same enemy was uttered by Obadiah after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.—the latter may or may not have known Jeremiah's oracles. Subsequently, in later postexilic times, a reader or copyist revised the Jeremiah passage on the basis of the prophecy of Obadiah.

of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. At this time were added at least verses 10-14. The origin of 15-21 is much less certain. Of course many scholars ascribe the verses to the author of 10-14, but there is an increasing number of writers who interpret 15-21 as a still later appendix. To fix the date of this appendix, or the dates of the several elements embodied in the appendix, is no easy task. The pronounced eschatological tone points to a relatively late date, but the historical references and allusions are so obscure that they are of little assistance in fixing the date more definitely. It is very doubtful, however, that even the appendix ought to be dated as late as the Maccabean age, as is done by Wellhausen, Marti, Barton, Haupt, and others. The resemblances with Joel[27] suggest for the completion of the book of Obadiah[28] a date not far from 400 B. C. In the words of Selbie: "The expressions in the closing verses are best satisfied by a date such as Nowack postulates for 1-14 (about 432 B. C.), or, perhaps, preferably, later still."[29] Similarly Bewer: "If the date of Joel is correctly placed between 400 and 350 B. C., this appendix must have been added some time before or soon after the beginning of the fourth century."[30]

Teaching of the Book. The purpose of the book in

[27] Compare Obad. 10 with Joel 3. 19; 11 with 3. 3; 15 with 1. 15; 3. 4, 7, 14; 17 with 2. 32; 3. 17. In some of these cases it is beyond question that Joel is the borrower; hence Obadiah in its final form must be earlier than Joel. For the date of Joel, see above, p. 397.

[28] Since the book contains two or more separate sections, it must remain undecided whether Obadiah is the name of the author of the earlier utterance, or of the author who gave the book its present form.

[29] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article, "Obadiah, Book of."

[30] *Obadiah*, p. 9. For a description of conditions after 586 B. C., see above, pp. 337–341, and for conditions in the fifth century, below, pp. 603–608.

its present form is twofold: (1) To announce judgment upon Edom, and (2), by the announcement of the speedy overthrow of this hated enemy to bring comfort and hope to the cruelly wronged Jews. In setting forth these denunciations and promises the book, directly or indirectly, gives expression to several ideas and convictions that are prominent in all the prophetic writings: (1) Yahweh has a special interest in Israel; temporarily he may permit her enemies to triumph, but in the end he must vindicate himself and his people.[31] (2) Obadiah shares with other prophets the hope of the establishment of a new kingdom of Yahweh, centering in Mount Zion and Jerusalem.[32] (3) Holiness will be the chief characteristic of the new kingdom.[33] (4) There is no direct reference to a Messianic king; Yahweh is to be the sole ruler.[34] (5) Obadiah sees no hope for the other nations; there is nothing but disaster and doom for the peoples outside of Israel.[35]

5. The Book of Jonah

Hero of the Book. The events recorded in the book of Jonah center around Jonah, the son of Amittai.[1] A

[31] Verses 10-14, 17-21.

[32] Verses 17, 21.

[33] Verse 17; the reference seems to be to ceremonial rather than moral holiness.

[34] "The Kingdom shall be Yahweh's," verse 21. Compare, however, "saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau" (21). In a sense these *saviours* are representatives of Yahweh like the Messianic king in other prophetic books.

[35] Verses 16-18.

[1] Jonah 1. 1. The meaning of the Hebrew name יוֹנָה, *Yōnāh*,—Septuagint, *Ἰωνᾶς*, *Iōnas*, Vulgate, *Jonas*—is not beyond doubt; it may be connected with a noun meaning "dove" or a verb meaning "oppress."

prophet bearing the same name is mentioned in 2 Kings 14. 25, and since the two names are found nowhere else in the Old Testament it is exceedingly probable that the Jonah of 2 Kings 14. 25 is identical with the hero of this little book. Of the personal life of Jonah nothing is known except what may be learned from the passage in Kings and the book bearing his name.[2] According to Kings, Jonah prophesied in the northern kingdom prior to the conquests of Jeroboam II, which makes him a predecessor of Amos and Hosea. He is said to have come from Gath-hepher,[3] a village on the border of Zebulon and Naphtali, near Japhia and Rimmon,[4] and commonly identified with a modern village bearing the name *el-Meshhed*.[5]

Contents and Outline. The book narrates a series of incidents connected with Jonah's commission to preach in Nineveh: Jonah receives the commission to deliver a message of judgment against Nineveh, but seeks to escape the responsibility by fleeing in the opposite direction; he is punished by being thrown overboard, but is swallowed by a big fish providentially provided. In the belly of the fish he offers a prayer, whereupon he is cast upon the

[2] On the historical value of the book see below, pp. 444–455. Some modern commentators, following the suggestion of Hitzig, have ascribed to Jonah the oracle in Isa. 15. 1 to 16. 12, which is said to have been spoken *in time past*, but this is mere assumption and has little in its favor (see vol. I, p. 147).

[3] 2 Kings 14. 25.

[4] Josh. 19. 12, 13.

[5] The village possesses one of the numerous tombs of Jonah, and the natives, both Jewish and Christian, regard it as the home of the prophet. Their belief finds support in ancient Jewish and Christian tradition. Jerome, for instance, states that the home and tomb of Jonah were shown two miles from Sepphoris on the road to Tiberias. Sepphoris is identified with the modern *Seffūrieh*, a village about two and a half miles from *el-Meshhed*.

shore and journeys to Nineveh, where he delivers a message of doom. When the doom is averted, through the sincere repentance of the Ninevites, the prophet utters a bitter complaint which draws a severe reprimand from Yahweh.

I. Jonah's Commission, Disobedience, and Punishment (1. 1-16).

1. Jonah's commission and disobedience (1. 1-3).
2. Discovery of Jonah's guilt (1. 4-10).
3. Jonah's punishment (1. 11-16).

II. Jonah's Wonderful Deliverance (1. 17 to 2. 10).

1. Jonah's preservation and deliverance (1. 17; 2. 10).
2. Jonah's prayer (2. 1-9).

III. Jonah's Preaching and Nineveh's Repentance (3. 1-10).

1. Jonah's second commission and preaching (3. 1-4).
2. Repentance of the Ninevites (3. 5-9).
3. Withholding of the judgment (3. 10).

IV. Jonah's Complaint and Rebuke (4. 1-11).

1. Jonah's displeasure, and prayer for immediate death (4. 1-3).
2. Yahweh's remonstrance (4. 4).
3. Rebuke of Jonah's narrowness, and justification of the divine mercy (4. 5-11).

Interpretation of the Book. The book of Jonah is unlike any other prophetic book in the Old Testament;[6] indeed, in many respects it is unlike any other biblical book. It is unquestionably, as a Jewish tradition suggests, a book by itself. Consequently, it cannot be

[6] All the other prophetic books record chiefly prophetic *utterances*, although sometimes embodying brief narratives of events; this book narrates a prophet's *work and experiences*, giving little space to his utterances. The book of Daniel does not come into consideration, since it is an apocalyptic and not a prophetic book. (F. C. Eiselen, *The Psalms and Other Sacred Writings*, Chapter XI).

thought strange that the most widely diverging views have been held concerning its significance and interpretation.

For the sake of convenience the various interpretations may be discussed under two heads: (1) The *historical* interpretation, which views the book as a *true history* of actual occurrences; (2) the *didactic* interpretations,[7] which hold that the book was written for a didactic purpose, the historical elements—if, indeed, there be any—being purely incidental.[8] Among scholars of a generation or two ago Pusey and Keil defended the historical interpretation so ably that more recent writers have added little or nothing to their arguments. Keil says concerning the book: "Its contents are neither pure fiction, allegory, nor myth; nor yet a prophetic legend, wrought up poetically with a moral and didactic aim, embellished into a miraculous story, and mingled with mythical elements; but with all its miracles it is to be taken as a true history of deep prophetico-symbolic and

[7] There are several of these, differing somewhat in details.

[8] The use of parables by Jesus should make Bible students cautious about denying on *a priori* grounds the presence in the Old Testament of a didactic book that is not history. Moreover, the Old Testament is rich in symbolism, especially when speaking of the exile. Thus, the vision of the dry bones, in Ezek. 37. 1-14, is a symbolical representation of the restoration from exile. A remarkably close parallel to the picture of Jonah in the fish's belly and of his deliverance is found in Jer. 51. 34, "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath *devoured* me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, *he hath, like a monster, swallowed me up, he hath filled his maw with my delicacies; he hath cast me out.*" And again, in verse 44, "And I will execute judgment upon Bel in Babylon, and *I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed.*" If the book of Jonah is interpreted as a symbolical representation of the experiences of Israel in exile and in connection with the restoration, it may well be regarded as an expansion of this picturesque portrayal by Jeremiah (See further, below, pp. 458, 459).

typical significance."[9] In support of this assertion he advances the following reasons: 1. Traditions handed down both among Jews and Christians agree in interpreting the book historically. 2. The many historical and geographical statements in the book are of a genuine historical character.[10] 3. The fundamental thought of the book, that Yahweh would show mercy even to the heathen if they repented,[11] excludes everything fictitious. 4. The psychologically truthful delineation of the personality of the prophet, of the mariners, and of the Ninevites favors an historical interpretation. 5. The position of the book among the prophetical writings points in the same direction.[12] 6. The historical character of the book is raised above all doubts by the utterances of the Lord in Matt. 12. 39ff.; 16. 4; Luke 11. 29-32, which at the same time throw light upon the prophetico-typical character of the prophetic mission. 7. The origin, contents, and tendency of the book become incomprehensible if we reject the historical character of the narrative. 8. The objections raised by the opponents of the historical view rest partly on an unjustifiable denial of the miraculous, partly on misunderstandings, unfounded assumptions, and untenable assertions.

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[9] *Introduction to the Old Testament*, I, pp. 395ff.; see also E. B. Pusey, *Minor Prophets*, I, pp. 371ff.

[10] For example, Keil claims that the mission of Jonah is in perfect keeping with the historical relations of his time; the description of the greatness of Nineveh (3. 3) is in harmony with the statements of the classical writers; its deep moral corruption is testified to by Nah. 3. 1; Zeph. 2. 13ff.; and the mourning of man and beast (3. 5-8) is confirmed as an Asiatic custom by Herodotus (IX, 24).

[11] Jonah 3. 10; 4. 10.

[12] "Had the collector of the canon not believed in the historical truth of this fact, had be beheld only religious truth in the garb of an allegory or fable in this book, why did he not place it among the Hagiographa?"

Do these arguments prove what is claimed for them? 1. That the post-Old Testament Jewish writings[13] considered the narrative of Jonah literal history may readily be admitted, as also the additional fact that the historical interpretation was commonly accepted by the early church fathers. This, however, is far from proving the historical character of the book; for Jewish tradition has again and again been found to be unreliable, and it is universally admitted that in no case can its testimony be accepted as final.[14] It can, at the most, serve as a starting point for investigation, and must be surrendered in the presence of legitimate evidence to the contrary. 2. Are the claims made under the second head more convincing? Of course a Hebrew prophet might have visited Nineveh about 770 B. C., but the possibility of such a visit by no means proves that such visit was actually made, or that all the events recorded in the book are historical. Furthermore, it is not quite in harmony with the facts to say that the size of Nineveh as given in 3. 3 is in accordance with the statements of classical authors; nor does it meet the requirements of modern research.[15] Similarly, the fact that the moral condition of Nineveh is faithfully depicted, or that the author is acquainted with ancient Asiatic customs, is far from demonstrating

[13] For instance, Tobit, Third Maccabees, Josephus, Philo, and the Talmud.

[14] See F. C. Eiselen, *The Books of the Pentateuch*, pp. 86-88. Early Christian traditions regarding Old Testament subjects are of little or no independent value, since most of them were taken over bodily from the Jews, without inquiry into their accuracy or reliability.

[15] Koenig, an exceedingly cautious scholar, says that "the diameter of even the fourfold city (Gen. 10. 11) was not equal to a three days' journey;" and he quotes Friedrich Delitzsch as saying: "The length of the road from Kouyunjik to Nimroud is only some twenty English miles" (Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Jonah").

that the entire book is intended to be understood as historical narrative.[16] 3. It is difficult to understand why the fundamental idea of the book excludes everything fictitious, even in the external literary form. The use of parables by Jesus as a means of instruction shows that the sublimest religious truths may be taught in the literary garb of fiction. 4. It is universally recognized that the plays of Shakespeare contain "psychologically truthful" delineations of human nature. Does it follow that these plays are historically accurate in every detail? 5. With reference to the fifth point C. H. H. Wright, an exceedingly cautious and conservative scholar, says, "If the book had been regarded as an historical narrative when the Hebrew canon was arranged, it would scarcely have been inserted among the prophetical books, or have been placed among them in the order in which it now stands."[17]

6. In the thought of many devout Christians the references of Jesus appear to settle the question conclusively in favor of the historical interpretation. On the other hand, there are many scholars equally devout who believe that the references of Jesus present no obstacle to the didactic interpretation. A close study of the words of Jesus reveals the following facts: (1) There is in the words of Jesus[18] not the slightest indication, direct or indirect, that he gave or intended to give any decision on the point under consideration. (2) The question cannot be settled by showing that the New Testament state-

[16] Modern novels frequently contain accurate descriptions of moral conditions prevailing at certain periods; yet no one would claim that therefore they must be accepted in their entirety as historical.

[17] *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 208.

[18] Of the verses mentioned Matt. 12. 40 is thought by many scholars not to be an original part of Jesus' utterance.

ments *may* be interpreted as implying an historical interpretation; what must be established is the fact that the words of Jesus "raise above all doubt the historical character of the book."[19] (3) Jesus refers to Jonah only by way of illustration; which makes it of no special consequence whether Jonah belongs to the realms of fiction or of fact.[20] We may, then, conclude that the utterances of Jesus contain no specific statement that would in any way throw light on the question under discussion,[21] and

[19] Pusey assumes a great deal when he says: "Our Lord says, 'Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly,' and no one who really believes him dare think that he was not." Much more just is the conclusion of C. H. H. Wright: "The New Testament references decide nothing except that the book is in some way or other a book of prophecy. Consequently, the question whether the book is also historical must be decided from internal evidence alone" (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 210). Even von Orelli admits: "It is not, indeed, proved with conclusive necessity that, if the resurrection of Jesus was a physical fact, Jonah's abode in the belly of the fish must also be just as historical" (*The Twelve Minor Prophets*, p. 172).

[20] Surely, the point to be emphasized loses none of its validity or power if it is illustrated from allegory, parable, or poetry instead of from history. In the words of G. A. Smith, "Suppose we tell slothful people that theirs will be the fate of the man who buried his talent, is this to commit us to the belief that the personages of Christ's parables actually existed? Or take the homiletic use of Shakespeare's dramas—'as Macbeth did,' or 'as Hamlet said.' Does it commit us to the historical reality of Macbeth or Hamlet? Any preacher among us would resent being bound by such an inference. And if we resent this for ourselves, how chary we should be about seeking to bind our Lord by it!" (*Minor Prophets*, II, pp. 508, 509).

[21] Note the words of Dean Farrar: "If it could be shown that Jesus intended by these words to stamp the story as literally true, every Christian would at once, and as a matter of course, accept it. But this is an assumption, and it is a bad form of uncharitableness to adopt the tone of those commentators who charge their opponents with setting aside the authority of Christ. Seeing that our Lord so largely adopted the method of moral allegory in his own parabolic teaching—seeing that it was part of his habit to embody truth in tales which were not literal facts, but were only told to fix deep spiritual lessons in the minds of

that the significance of his teaching remains the same whether the book is interpreted as history, or parable, or allegory.[22] On the other hand, while there is nothing in the words of Jesus to prove the truth of the *historical* view, there is at least one consideration that seems to favor the *non-historical* interpretation of the book. The defenders of the historical view are compelled to assume that the repentance and conversion of the Ninevites were without permanent results. Over against this it should be noted that the words of Jesus imply that the repentance and conversion of the Ninevites were permanent; the results were to be manifested in the Day of Judgment, to the confounding of those listening to one greater than Jonah. Indeed, the validity of Jesus' argument is closely bound up with this permanence; it is made of no effect by the admission that the Ninevites soon relapsed into wickedness and idolatry. Moreover, the book itself represents the conversion as real and permanent; else how could it have been acceptable to Yahweh, and have caused him to withhold judgment? If, now, the narrative is to be taken as historical, the silence of the entire Old Testament regarding this remarkable conversion and of the inscriptions regarding the incident related in the book create a serious historical difficulty.[23] If, on the other hand, the book is an allegory or a parable

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the hearers—nothing is more possible than that he should have pointed to the deep symbolism of an Old-Testament parable without at all intending to imply that the facts actually happened." (*Minor Prophets*, pp. 234, 235).

[22] See also the discussion of the general significance of the references of Jesus to Old Testament books, in F. C. Eiselen, *The Books of the Pentateuch*, pp. 77-85.

[23] See further, below, pp. 449, 450. The inscriptions furnish a rather complete picture of life in Assyria during the eighth century B. C.

the difficulty vanishes, for these types of literature retain their value even though they are not based upon actual historical events. To say the least, therefore, the New Testament references to the book of Jonah fail to establish the historical character of the narrative. The discussion in the succeeding pages will show whether the didactic interpretation of the book really makes the origin, contents, and tendency of the book incomprehensible;[24] it will also bring out the justice or injustice of the assertion that the objections to the historical interpretation are based upon unwarranted assumptions and an unjustifiable denial of the supernatural.[25]

One argument in favor of the historical interpretation has been expressed by a more recent writer in these words: "Of all parables this was the most impossible to any Jewish writer. For what are the contents of the book? An Israelitish prophet, with regard to whom we have the distinct assurance that he prophesied to the Ten Tribes, and that he uttered predictions that were verified. Now, here is a book given to us by the ministry of that Israelitish prophet that has not a single particle of Israelitish ministry in it from beginning to end. This man is confined to whom? To a Gentile people. It has for its sphere what? Not any city of Israel, but the city of Nineveh, the capital of the great opponent of the Ten Tribes of Israel. And the whole scene is confined to his ministry in regard to that Gentile people, and the Gentile people are the object of divine commiseration, and Jonah himself is the object of divine complaint, if not of condemnation. Now, I say, it was another[26] im-

[24] As claimed in argument 7 above.

[25] As claimed in argument 8.

[26] Probably a misprint for "an utter."

possibility that any Jewish mind would have conceived fiction after that pattern. It would have been to the glorification of Israel and not to the glorification of Nineveh. It would have been to the setting forth of God's fierce anger against the Gentile people, and not his commiseration toward the destroyer of the people of God."[27]

The present writer does not profess to know what a Jewish mind could or would have conceived; and yet for the sake of argument it may be admitted that no ordinary "Jewish mind would have conceived fiction after that pattern." Why? Because the ordinary Jewish mind failed to appreciate the lofty conception of the character of Yahweh reflected in the book of Jonah. But, since we find in Hebrew history spirits like Moses, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, who towered far above their contemporaries in spiritual insight and appreciation, is it, indeed, impossible to believe that an exceptional Jewish mind, inspired by a more adequate conception of Yahweh, may have protested against the narrow exclusiveness of his contemporaries? Such a protest, as may be seen from the New Testament parables, may be presented through parable at least as effectively as through historical narrative.

Evidently, the arguments commonly depended upon to establish the truth of the historical view fail to prove the case. What, then, are the arguments urged against the historical, in favor of the didactic, interpretation:

1. If the conversion of the Ninevites took place on the scale suggested in the book,[28] it is one of the most marvelous events in human history, certainly in human history as it affected the Hebrew people. Such an event would

[27] John Urquhart, in *Bible Student and Teacher*, 1905, p. 175.

[28] Jonah 3. 5-10.

have furnished Hebrew prophets with abundant material to emphasize the earnest appeals to repentance addressed to their own people and the frequent denunciations directed against Nineveh. "On what principle," inquires a recent writer, "is the silence about such a remarkable fact of the book of Kings, and the silence of such prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Zephaniah to be accounted for?"

2. The statement of Layard has often been quoted in favor of the historical view: "I have known a Christian priest to frighten a whole Mussulman town to tents and repentance, by publicly proclaiming that he had received a divine commission to announce a coming earthquake and plague."[29] But neither the book itself nor the use of the incident by Jesus permits the placing of the conversion of the Ninevites on a level with this temporary, superficial, and superstitious turning to God. If, however, the conversion was as far-reaching as the narrative implies, the wholesale conversion of a world city like Nineveh from a well-established, magnificent, and impressive native religion to the worship of Yahweh, as the result of the preaching of a single individual, is without analogy in the religious history of the world.

3. The Old Testament everywhere represents the Ninevites as idolaters, nowhere suggesting that at any time, temporarily or permanently, they were worshipers of Israel's God.

4. The history of Assyria and Nineveh during the eighth century B. C., at least in its broad outlines, is well known from the inscriptions; yet nowhere is there even the slightest hint of a religious revolution such as is de-

[29] *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 632.

scribed in the book of Jonah. The kings of Assyria during the period of Jonah are fairly well known, and it is not easy to imagine a monarch of the type depicted in the Assyrian inscriptions behaving as the king of Nineveh is said to have done.

5. From the time of Ashur-naṣir-pal to Sennacherib, that is, from about 880 to 705 B. C.—the date of Jonah being about 770 B. C.—Calah, not Nineveh, was the capital of Assyria.

6. Modern archæological research has thrown doubt on the alleged size of the city and the suggested number of its inhabitants in the eighth century B. C. [30]

7. The very structure of the narrative suggests its didactic purpose. Had the primary object been history, the author's silence concerning various details would be peculiar. In the words of Kleinert: "He says nothing of the sins of which Nineveh was guilty, nor of the journey of the prophet to Nineveh, nor does he mention the place where he was cast out upon the land, nor the name of the Assyrian king. In any case, if the narrative were intended to be historical, it would be incomplete by the frequent fact that the circumstances which are necessary for the connection of events are mentioned later than they happened, and *only where attention has to be directed to them* as having already happened."[31] Here should be noted also the abrupt close of the book. The author, having pointed out, so to speak, the moral of the story, has no occasion to pursue the subject further. Von Baudissin, moreover, calls attention to the symmetrical structure of the book as indicating that the author's primary concern was not with the narration of

[30] See also above, p. 444.

[31] Quoted from G. A. Smith, *Minor Prophets*, II, p. 499.

history but with the artistic and forceful arrangement of certain material for didactic purposes.[32]

8. Another objection has been expressed in these words: "A narrative in which a man is represented as composing a poetical prayer, surrounded with water, his head bound with seaweed, and drifting with marine currents, while inside a monster of the sea, was surely never intended by its author to be understood as literal history."[33]

9. Thus far no reference has been made to the miraculous element in the book; the objections noted are principally historical; and, though to some students they may appear more weighty than to others, no interpretation which fails to take them into consideration can be regarded as adequate. Turning now to the objection said to be based upon the miraculous element—it has frequently been charged that disbelief in miracles or the supernatural is the chief, if not the only, ground for denying the historical character of the book.[34] "But for them," says Perowne, "it may well be doubted whether any one would ever have taken the book of Jonah to be anything but history."[35] This sweeping accusation is unwarranted, for there are many commentators who entertain no doubts regarding the reality of the supernatural, or the possibility of miracles, who nevertheless doubt the

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[32] *Die Buecher des Alten Testaments*, p. 595. As illustration he mentions the similarity in the opening words of the two main divisions of the book (1. 1, 2; 3. 1, 2); the words of the ship captain and of the king of Nineveh (1. 6; 3. 9); twice Jonah desires death in almost identical words (4. 3, 8); twice he is reproved by Yahweh in the same language (4. 4, 9); etc.

[33] George T. Ladd, *What is the Bible?*, p. 84.

[34] See above, p. 443.

[35] *Obadiah and Jonah*, p. 48.

historicity of the book of Jonah.[36] Moreover, while the defenders of the historical view center the question of the supernatural and miraculous around the ability of a fish to swallow a man,[37] the swallowing of Jonah is only one comparatively unimportant incident in the narrative. Indeed, the situation would not be altered by the admission, which may readily be made, that any one of several kinds of fish is capable of swallowing a human being. It is not the impossibility of miracles, or the presence of any one miracle—not even one of those much more striking than the swallowing of Jonah—that is urged against the historical interpretation, but the long succession, in such small compass, of a startling number of miracles. There is a miracle at every step: The disobedient prophet is pursued by a miraculously wrought tempest, the lot is miraculously directed to Jonah, the prophet is cast overboard and immediately the storm ceases. To preserve the life of the prophet a great fish appears, without injury Jonah passes into its belly, where he is miraculously kept alive for three days and three nights, when, as Luther remarked, "in three hours he might have been digested and changed into the nature, flesh, and blood of the monster." In the fish's belly his mind remains clear enough to compose a song of thanksgiving, then at the divine command he is cast out upon the dry land. Greatest wonder of all, at the preaching of Jonah the

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[36] Says R. W. Dale: "I receive without a shadow of doubt many miraculous stories of actual facts, but this book, on the whole, looks to me unlike a story of actual facts" (*Expositor*, Fourth Series, VI, p. 3).

[37] Urquhart, after proving what has been proved many times before, that a certain kind of whale can easily swallow a man, exclaims in triumph: "And who will tell me now that the whale is not able to swallow a prophet; that there isn't a whale in all the seas able to swallow Jonah? It could have swallowed six Jonahs and given them up again."

whole wicked city of Nineveh repents and turns to Yahweh. A "gourd" is made to spring up in one night, and in one night it is caused to wither, and finally, Yahweh causes an east wind to blow. Here are twelve miracles in a book of forty-eight verses. Is there anything like it anywhere else in sacred writ?[38]

The difficulties arising from the miraculous element in the book may be summarized thus: (1) The miraculous character of the book from beginning to end is unique in the literature of the Bible; (2) the book presents no crisis demanding this extraordinary display of divine power; (3) in so far as we know the processes of divine manifestation, the miracles of the book of Jonah are without parallel.[39]

That these nine arguments against the historical interpretation amount to mathematical demonstration is not and need not be claimed; and, no doubt, their exact weight will be variously estimated by different readers, but that some possess considerable force cannot be denied. At any rate, the most careful students of the book are almost universally agreed that its primary purpose is not historical but didactic. With some this is a conviction based upon a fair evaluation of the facts to which attention has been called; with others it is an equally inescapable impression made by the general contents, spirit,

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[38] To say that the statements in the book put the subject beyond doubt is to beg the question, since it must first of all be established that the book is intended to record history.

[39] The defenders of the historical view seem to be conscious of this peculiarity for, strange to say, almost without exception they seek to minimize the miraculous element and to explain the events, as much as possible, on the basis of natural causes. In this attempt some have not hesitated to force the text into saying things far removed from the clear meaning of the words.

and tone of the book. "If you ask me," says R. W. Dale, "why I have come to this conclusion, I should answer: Very much in the same way in which you have come to the conclusion that *Pilgrim's Progress* is a work of the imagination. When we know what real life is, Bunyan's story does not look to us like a story of real life. And so quite apart from the story of the great fish which swallowed Jonah, and which after three days discharged him alive on the dry land, this book does not look to me like a plain story of events which really happened."[40]

Teaching of the Book. Granting that the book is primarily didactic, what is its fundamental teaching? To this question various answers have been given, of which the following are the more important: Ewald thinks that the aim of the author is to teach the truth that "True fear and repentance bring salvation from Yahweh." When the sailors give Yahweh alone the glory they are saved and when the Ninevites forsake their evil ways and turn to Yahweh their doom is averted. Chapter 4, he thinks, teaches that the ultimate basis of this truth is found in Yahweh himself. It "reveals the supreme divine love as the true and necessary basis of the redemption of the penitent of all sorts without exception."[41] Hitzig sees an apologetic purpose in the book. It seeks, he thinks, to justify the prophets for the nonfulfillment of their oracles by pointing out that they speak under divine compulsion; hence, if any justification is needed it is needed by God, who is behind the prophet. At the same time it seeks to justify God and to silence all complaints arising out of the nonfulfillment by trac-

[40] *Expositor*, Fourth series, VI, p. 2.

[41] *Die Propheten des Alten Bundes*, III, pp. 236, 237.

ing, in the closing verses, the nonfulfillment to the divine mercy and compassion.[42] A similar interpretation is suggested by Vatke: "The author obviously teaches, (1) since the prophet cannot withdraw from the divine commission, he is not responsible for the contents of his predictions; (2) the prophet frequently announces divine purposes which are not fulfilled, because God in his mercy takes back the threat, when repentance follows; (3) the honor of a prophet is not hurt when a threat is not fulfilled, and the inspiration remains unquestioned, although many predictions are not carried out."[43] According to Riehm, "the practical purpose of the little book is to give instruction as to the proper attitude toward prophetic threats; they are to be respected as God's words, which the prophet must proclaim even against his own will; but their fulfillment may be averted by repentance, and when this has happened no exception must be taken to the nonfulfillment of the divine message."[44] Volck discovers in the book an attempt to set forth the true nature of the prophetic calling. "We learn from it," he says, "(1) that the prophet must perform what God commands him, however unusual it appears; (2) that even death cannot nullify his calling; (3) that the prophet has no right to the fulfillment of his prediction, but must place it in God's hand."[45]

There are elements of truth in each of these views. All the lessons mentioned may be learned from the book, but the interpretations indicated fail to emphasize sufficiently that which seems to be the very heart of its mes-

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[42] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, pp. 174, 175.
[43] *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 688.
[44] *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 1862, p. 413.
[45] Herzog, *Realencyclopædie*, article "Jona."

sage: In some respects this little story reaches the sublimest height of Old Testament religion; and it is no rhetorical exaggeration when Cornill exclaims: "This apparently trivial book is one of the deepest and grandest that was ever written, and I should like to say to everyone that approaches it, 'Take off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' In this book Israelitish prophecy quits the scene of battle as victor, and as victor in its severest struggle—that against itself."[46]

What, then, gives to the little book this significance? What is the lesson that "runs like a red thread through the whole and at last becomes a knot whose unloosing in 4. 10, 11 forms the glorious finale?" It is the *universality of the divine love and compassion.* Nowhere else in the Old Testament is such continued stress laid on the Fatherhood of God, embracing in its infinite love the whole human race. The book of Jonah is indeed a "missionary book," teaching that God does not wish that "any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." During the postexilic period there was growing among the Jews a spirit of exclusiveness,[47] creating a feeling that Yahweh's interest did not extend beyond Judaism. To counteract this narrow particularism is the aim of the prophetic author of this little book. "The national limits of the old covenant are here wondrously broken through; the entire heathen world opens as a mission field to the messengers of Yahweh. Thus the book with its wide-hearted outlook on God's ways, and the sharp criticism of the selfish spirit of the Jewish people, as a didactic work, is itself a miracle in the literature of this people."

[46] *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 170.

[47] See above, the Teaching of Joel, p. 403.

Literary Form. The book of Jonah has been described as a prophetic parable, an allegory, a historico-symbolic prophecy, a *Midrash.* It has been interpreted as a parabolic history of all Israel,[48] or of a single party in the postexilic community. If the book is an allegory of Israel's history, Jonah symbolizes the nation. Israel had received a divine commission to make known Yahweh to all the earth,[49] but Israel was disobedient and failed to carry out the divine purpose;[50] in punishment it was swallowed up by the "monster."[51] In exile Israel turned to Yahweh[52] and, in consequence, was delivered from the monster.[53] The duration of Israel's judgment is represented by Hosea as lasting two or three days.[54] While the exile brought the Israelites, in some measure, to their senses, they were not entirely cured. Their mission was not revoked, and it remained their duty to carry the knowledge of Yahweh to the ends of the earth. But the restored Israel remained silent; there were many who could think of other nations only as doomed; they were displeased because the threats of the preexilic prophets against these non-Israelites remained unfulfilled. To teach these narrow-minded Jews the folly and wickedness of their attitude is the aim of chapters 3 and 4.

Others believe that the author had in mind only the unspiritual Israelites of the postexilic period and that the

[48] For instance, Kleinert, Cheyne, C. H. H. Wright, G. A. Smith.

[49] Gen. 12. 13; Isa. 42. 1-8; compare Jonah 1. 1, 2.

[50] Isa. 42. 19-24; compare Jonah 1. 3, 4.

[51] Jer. 51. 34; compare Jonah 1. 17. The word translated "monster" in Jeremiah is translated "sea monster" in Gen. 1. 21; Job 7. 12; etc.

[52] The prophets frequently declared that the exile would have this effect on the nation; compare Jonah 2. 1ff.

[53] Jer. 51. 44; Ezra 1. 1ff.; compare Jonah 2. 10.

[54] Hosea 6. 2; compare Jonah 1. 17. For the meaning of the Hosea passage see any recent commentary.

coincidences with the earlier period are accidental. According to this view, Jonah represents not the whole nation but only the unspiritual portion of the postexilic community, and the purpose of the book is to convince this narrow-minded party of the iniquity of selfish particularism and to furnish a more adequate vision of the divine purpose.

Budde, accepting, on the whole, the view of the teaching of the book suggested in the preceding paragraph, thinks that the book is an excerpt from a *Midrash*[55] on the books of Kings, either the *Midrash* mentioned in 2 Chron. 24. 27, or one otherwise unknown.[56] He further suggests that the passage underlying the *Midrash* in 2 Kings 14. 25-27, which is the only Old Testament passage outside of the book of Jonah in which Jonah is mentioned. "The author of the book of Kings puts into Yahweh's mouth warm words of mercy toward the northern kingdom. It is easy to see how a *Midrash* might be added showing that his mercy extended even to an alien, heathen empire." Budde's suggestion is worthy of consideration, but cannot be regarded as fully established. Indeed, it is exceedingly doubtful that the *Midrash* used by the Chronicler was permeated by the universalistic spirit so prominent in the book of Jonah. On the other hand, it is not impossible that the narrative material used by the author was secured from such a *Midrash.*

Whatever may be the final conclusion regarding the type of literature to which the little book belongs, the

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[55] A *Midrash* may be defined as an imaginative development of a thought or theme suggested by scripture, a didactic or homiletic exposition, an edifying religious story.

[56] *Zeitschrift fuer Altestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1892, pp. 40ff.

significance of its teaching is in no wise affected by the diversity of opinion. In any case the fact remains that its message reached the highest summit of Old Testament vision. "In no book of the Old Testament," says Bleek, "is the all-embracing father-love of God, which has no respect for person or nation, but is moved to mercy toward all who turn to him, exhibited with equal impressiveness, or in a manner so nearly approaching the spirit of Christianity."[57]

Sources of Material. Is the book of Jonah entirely a work of the imagination? If not, where did the author secure the material out of which he constructed the story? Hitzig, Cornill, and others consider the narrative portions entirely a work of the imagination. Other commentators have thought that they could discover traces of ancient myths, either Greek or Babylonian. Thus the book has been connected with the myth of Hercules, who is said to have delivered Hesione, the daughter of Laomedon, from a sea monster; and with that of Perseus, who is said to have freed Andromeda from a monster, near the city of Joppa.[58] In more recent times the "great fish" has frequently been connected with Babylonian mythology. F. C. Baur suggested that Jonah may have some connection with the Babylonian *Oannes,*[59] mentioned by Berosus. Cheyne and others suspect a dependence upon the Babylonian *Tiamat* myths.[60] Marti

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[57] *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 404.

[58] Suggested by Gesenius, DeWette, Rosenmueller, Friedrichsen, and others; compare *Iliad*, xx. 145ff.; xxi. 441 ff.; Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, iii, 9. 3.

[59] In Ilgen's *Zeitschrift fuer die historische Theologie*, Neue Folge, I, pp. 102ff.

[60] *Theological Review*, 1877, pp. 211ff.

calls attention also to the Buddhist story of Mittavindaka, and to an Egyptian legend of the third pre-Christian millennium.[61] All of these stories reveal some resemblances with the biblical narrative, but the similarities are so slight and the differences so striking that any direct connection or relationship seems more than improbable. On the other hand, there may well be some connection between the "great fish" and *Tiamat,* other Old Testament references or allusions to which may be seen in the figures of Rahab[62] and Leviathan.[63] If this is so, the rest of the story may still be a work of the imagination.

Granting that the narrative is essentially a work of the imagination, why did the author make the imaginary story center around Jonah? Cheyne finds no connection between the Jonah of this little book and the prophet named in 2 Kings 14. 25. Starting from the fact that the Hebrew word translated "dove" is the same as the proper name "Jonah," he finds an explanation in the custom of referring to Israel as a dove.[64] But why is this dove represented as a prophet? Because, he replies, the mission of Israel, which is symbolized by the dove, is a prophetic mission.[65] A somewhat different explanation is offered by G. A. Smith: "In history Jonah appears only as concerned with Israel's reconquest of her lands from the heathen. Did the author of the book say, 'I will take such a man, one to whom tradition attributes no outlook beyond Israel's own territories, for none could

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[61] *Das Dodekapropheton*, p. 246. For numerous other legends of a similar nature see H. Schmidt, *Jona*, pp. 122ff.

[62] Isa. 51. 9; Ps. 89. 10.

[63] Isa. 27. 1; Job 3. 8; compare also Jer. 51. 34, 44.

[64] Compare Ps. 68. 13.

[65] Isa. 54. 13, margin; compare 42. 4; etc.

be so typical of Israel, narrow, selfish, and with no love for the world beyond herself'?"[66] If the narrative must be accepted as a work of the imagination, Smith's explanation of the use of Jonah appears to be more natural and satisfactory.

Still others believe that the narrative is not purely imaginative, but that the author owes much of the material—how much it may be impossible to say—to traditions centering around Jonah and resting upon a more or less substantial historical basis. These traditions may have told of a journey of the prophet to Nineveh, of a shipwreck and deliverance, or simply of a discourse uttered by him against the Assyrian city. Treating this traditional material with considerable freedom, the prophetic author may have cast it into the literary form through which he thought he might set before his readers most forcibly the truths he wanted them to take to heart. For an appreciation of the permanent religious value of the book it matters little whether the narrative is entirely a work of the imagination or not, and if not, whence the author derived his material. The narrative is only the garment in which a prophetic spirit clothed the eternal truth of the all-embracing love and compassion of Yahweh.

Date of the Book. If the interpretation of the book suggested in the preceding pages is correct, it follows almost inevitably that its origin must be assigned to a period separated from the prophet Jonah by several centuries. Indeed, it is assigned to such a late date by all writers who interpret the book as having primarily a didactic purpose. Even some of the defenders of the his-

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[66] *The Minor Prophets*, II, p. 504.

torical interpretation believe that the narrative was not written by the prophet Jonah, whose experiences it is thought to describe. Says Harman: "The language seems altogether inconsistent with such an early date, and would indicate a period just before, or soon after, the Babylonian captivity."[67] Defenders of the traditional date rarely advance specific reasons for their belief; ordinarily they are content with pointing out that there is nothing in the book to prove that Jonah was not the author. Beardslee advances five reasons, two of which, however, have no bearing on the question of authorship; the remaining three are: (1) Its place among the Minor Prophets; (2) "all details of the narrative lead us to regard it as a personal record"; (3) "the tone of the book . . . is more in harmony with Jonah's time than with the later postexilic period."[68] The weakness of these arguments can best be shown by considering the arguments on the other side.

The date must be determined wholly on the basis of internal evidence, for the position of the book in the collection of the Minor Prophets proves nothing;[69] it certainly does *not* prove that the compilers of the canon "were firmly convinced that the prophet Jonah was the author." Its didactic character made the *prophetic* collection its only suitable place; its brevity secured for it a position among the *Minor* Prophets, and its mention of the prophet Jonah determined its admission among the books considered the *earlier*. Jewish tradition is silent on the subject of authorship, perhaps, because it took Jonah's authorship for granted. "In the Talmudic

[67] *Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, p. 433.

[68] *Outlines of an Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 111.

[69] See above, pp. 389, 390.

period," remarks Fuerst, "the question respecting its author was left altogether undecided."[70]

The internal evidence in favor of the late date of the book—aside from the considerations urged in the preceding pages—may be summarized as follows:

1. *The Literary Arguments:* (1) Jonah is nowhere mentioned as the author; he is always spoken of in the third person, except where the author places direct utterances in his mouth.[71] (2) "Although there are many vivid details, they are such as might be suggested by ordinary experiences, a storm at sea or exposure to the sun; *there are none of those casual allusions to time, place, or person which we expect in a man's account of his own experiences.*"

2. *The Linguistic Argument:*[72] It is generally admitted that the book of Jonah contains several linguistic peculiarities, especially Aramaisms;[73] but concerning the explanation of these and their bearing upon the question of authorship opinions have differed very widely. Keil is content with saying that none of the unusual words and expressions "can *with certainty* be said not to belong to the old Hebrew modes of expression."[74] Others, arguing from the language of the book of Hosea, point out that the dialect of the north—thought to have been spoken by Jonah—differed from that of the

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[70] *Ueber den Kanon*, p. 33. The ascription of the entire collection of Minor Prophets to the Men of the Great Synagogue (F. C. Eiselen, *The Books of the Pentateuch*, p. 86), of course included the book of Jonah.

[71] Compare 1. 9; 2. 2ff.; etc.

[72] For a general estimate of the linguistic argument, see above, p. 396.

[73] A list of these expressions may be found in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, II, p. 748; S. R. Driver, *Introduction*, p. 322; Bewer, *Jonah*, p. 12.

[74] *Introduction*, p. 402.

south, and that, the northern kingdom being nearer the territory in which Aramaic was spoken, it would be only natural to find Aramaic elements in the language spoken by a northerner, even at an early date. Were the peculiarities fewer in number, this might serve as an adequate explanation, but when so many peculiarities are found crowded in so short a space, it seems more reasonable to explain them as due to the fact that, when the book of Jonah was written, the literary language of the Hebrews had already been considerably influenced by the Aramaic. This takes us down to the period of the exile or later.

3. *The Theological Argument:* If the book has primarily a didactic purpose, and if any one of the views regarding its central teaching mentioned above is correct, the theological ideas expressed and the general tone of the book favor a period subsequent to the activity of the great eighth-century prophets. Indeed, no period was more suitable for the expression of these ideas than the generations following the legalistic reforms of Ezra-Nehemiah, when a living voice was needed to counteract the narrow particularism of the age.[75]

4. *The Historical Argument:* (1) Nineveh enjoyed its greatest splendor after the time of Jonah, but even during its most flourishing period it did not reach the extent suggested in 3. 3.[76] One familiar with the city from personal observation could hardly use the terms employed in the book. On the other hand, they might well come from an author who had never seen the city because he lived after its destruction in 607/606 B. C., and was dependent for information on oral tradition or a late

[75] See above, p. 403.

[76] See above, p. 444.

Midrash. (2) "Nonmention of the name of the Assyrian king, who played such a prominent part in chapter 3, may be taken as an indication that it was not known to the author of the book."[77] (3) The description of an Assyrian king as "king of Nineveh"[78] is very unusual. The conservative Sayce goes so far as to say that it could not have been used as long as the Assyrian empire was in existence.[79] (4) The definite statement in 3. 3, "Nineveh *was* an exceeding great city," points to an author who wrote when Nineveh's greatness had departed.[80]

5. *The Argument from Literary Parallels:* The book of Jonah presents many literary parallels with other Old Testament writings.[81] This is especially true of the prayer in 2. 2-9.[82] These resemblances are too numerous to be explained as due to accident; the only natural interpretation is that the author of the prayer adopted and adapted passages from psalms with which he was famil-

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[77] S. R. Driver, *Introduction*, p. 322.

[78] Jonah 3. 6.

[79] *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 487. This conclusion is supported by the exhaustive study of the titles of Assyrian kings presented by Professor Wilson in the *Princeton Review*, July 1904, and 1905.

[80] The attempt has been made to weaken the force of this argument by interpreting the tense as a "synchronistic perfect"; that is, Jonah looking back to his first impression of the city, states that at that time it impressed him as a great city. In support of this interpretation reference is made to Gen. 1. 2, "and the earth was waste and void." But this passage rather confirms the interpretation that the greatness of the city was a thing of the past. To the author of Gen. 1. 2 the earth was no longer waste and void.

[81] Compare 3. 9 with Joel 2. 14; 4. 2 with Exod. 34. 6; Joel 2. 13; Pss. 86. 15; 103. 8.

[82] Compare verse 2 with Pss. 18. 5, 6; 120. 1; verse 3 with Pss. 42. 7; 18. 4, 5; verse 4 with Psa. 31. 22; Lam. 3. 54; verse 5 with Pss. 18. 4; 69. 1; 116. 3; verse 7 with Psa. 142. 3; verse 9 with Pss. 3. 8; 50. 14.

iar.[83] Some of the psalms used certainly are later than the age of the prophet Jonah. Consequently, the literary parallels, like the other arguments, point to a late date.

These five lines of argument all point in the same direction, namely, that the book was not composed in the eighth century by Jonah, but several centuries later by a great prophetic spirit. The exact date is not easily determined. If the dates of the psalms quoted could be fixed, or if dependence upon Joel could be established, the task would be easier, but the dates of the psalms will always remain more or less doubtful and dependence upon Joel is by no means certain. Hence the almost startling diversity of opinion among scholars as to the exact date: Kleinert, for instance, thinks of the exile; Ewald, of the sixth or fifth century; Driver, of the fifth; von Orelli, of the later part of the Chaldean or the earlier part of the Persian period; Cornill, of the close of the Persian or the early years of the Greek period; Nowack, after Joel; G. A. Smith, probably about 300; Marti, about 300 or the third century; Koenig, not later than 300; Hitzig, the Maccabean age; etc. If the prophetic canon was completed about 200 B. C., as is now generally thought, the book cannot be of later origin; and if the interpretation of its teaching set forth in the preceding pages is correct, it probably is not earlier than the age of Ezra-Nehemiah; in other words, the origin of the book may be placed somewhere between 400 and 200, perhaps soon after 300 B. C.

Unity of the book. The arguments from literary parallels based upon 2. 2-9 are of value in determining

[83] It is incorrect, however, to consider the prayer merely a string of quotations.

the date of the entire book only if the prayer formed a part of the book in its original form. Against the originality of the prayer—and thus against the unity of the book—it is urged that the prayer is not suitable in its present position, that it is not appropriate in the mouth of Jonah while in the belly of the fish, but only after he had been cast out upon the dry land. A more suitable place being after 2. 10, it is felt that the author of the book, had he been also the author of the prayer, would undoubtedly have placed it after that verse.[84] Consequently, many scholars regard the prayer a later addition, made by some one who may have "found the psalm ready-made and in a collection where it was perhaps attributed to Jonah, who inserted it after verse 2,[85] which records that Jonah did pray from the belly of the fish, and inserted it there more readily because it seemed right for a book which found its place among the Twelve Prophets to contribute, as all the others did, some actual discourse of the prophet whose name it bore."[86] Others see no necessity for denying the prayer to the author of the rest of the book. They admit the difficulty of determining whether he actually composed the prayer or found it "ready-made," but they consider it quite conceivable that he inserted it in the book in its present position. The author knew, they reason, when he wrote 1. 17, that his hero would be saved, for he stated that God "prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah"; hence, from the point of view of the author, Jonah was safe as soon as he entered the belly of the fish, and a song of thanks-

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[84] So, for instance, Budde, *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1892, p. 42.

[85] In English, verse 1.

[86] G. A. Smith, *Minor Prophets*, II, p. 511.

giving was in order. "Given the fish," says G. A. Smith, "and the divine purpose of the fish, the psalm is intelligible and appears in its proper place."[87] To the present writer it seems improbable that the prayer was composed by the author of the rest of the book, for he surely would have selected expressions more suitable to the condition of his hero. It is more difficult to determine whether an earlier prayer was inserted in the book by the author of the narrative sections, or whether the prayer owes its origin or present position to a later reader, who missed the prayer referred to in 2. 1 or an expression of gratitude on the part of the delivered prophet,[88] and therefore proceeded to supply the lack.

Several attempts have been made to prove that, even aside from the prayer, the book is a compilation of material taken from several different sources. As early as 1799, Nachtigal assumed three sources, which he separated on the basis of differences in language, spirit, and manner of presentation.[89] Later writers, on the basis of more or less independent investigations, questioned the unity of the book,[90] but only two or three of the more recent theories deserve detailed consideration. W. Boehme, after a careful critical examination of the book, reaches the conclusion, on the basis of alleged contradic-

[87] *Minor Prophets*, II, p. 512.

[88] J. A. Bewer, *Jonah*, p. 23.

[89] He considered the prayer to be the oldest, uttered by Jonah "after God had delivered him out of the hand of the king of Assyria." To it were added chapters 3 and 4 by an exile in Babylonia, and still later, 1. 1-17; 2. 1, 10 by a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah. (Eichhorn's *Allgemeine Bibliothek der Biblischen Litteratur*, 1799, pp. 221 ff.)

[90] For instance, Bunsen, *Gott in der Geschichte*, I, pp. 349ff.; C. Koehler, *Der Prophetismus der Hebraeer* (cp. Farrar, *Minor Prophets*, p. 236); P. Kleinert, *Jona*, p. 9; K. Kohler, *Theological Review*, 1879, pp. 139ff. The theories of all these writers are, on the whole, rather simple.

tions in the narrative, differences in the language, the use of different divine names, etc., that, besides several minor later additions, material coming from four sources may be distinguished. He distributes the contents as follows: (1) A, the author of the kernel of chapters 1 to 4; (2) B, the author of the narrative in chapters 3 and 4, in some instances parallel with the latter part of the material contributed by A, in others differing from it; (3) R, the redactor who combined A and B; (4) the reviser, who expanded ABR, especially in chapters 1 and 4, and inserted the prayer, composed by an unknown poet; (5) a few smaller additions, the latest of which, 1. 8a, is later than the Septuagint translation. A is assigned to the fourth or the third pre-Christian Century.[91]

H. Schmidt agrees with Boehme that material from different sources may be recognized, but in his explanations of later insertions he lays much more stress upon the influence of religious motives. Thus, he thinks, that the abrupt change from divine wrath to divine mercy disturbed a later reader and led him to introduce the prayer in 2. 2-9; in chapter 3 this reader thought that Yahweh was too easily reconciled, hence he inserted 3. 6-9; 1. 13, 14 is intended to remove a difficulty created by the fact that non-Israelite sailors are permitted to throw a prophet of Yahweh into the sea, without being punished for it; etc.[92] These various attempts to disprove the unity of the book have not been favorably received by scholars. In the words of Bewer, they "show that there are certain difficulties in the text which must

[91] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1887, pp. 224-284.

[92] *Ibid*, 1905, pp. 285-310. Attention may be called also [to the discussions by H. Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen*, II, pp. 260-265; E. Sievers, *Alttestamentliche Miscellen*, 2; W. Erbt, *Elias, Elisa, Jona*; J. Bewer, *Jonah*, pp. 13-21.

be accounted for. But they must not be magnified. There are real difficulties, for example, in 1. 8, 9; 3. 8; 4. 5, but the remedies needed are slight, and all theories that work with several sources, or with many transpositions, are too artificial to be true."[93] We may conclude, therefore, that with the possible exception of the prayer, the book of Jonah is the work of one writer and that, with the exception of minor alterations, it is now substantially as it was when it left the hands of the author.

6. The Book of Micah[1]

Name. The name "Micah"[2] is an abbreviation of the name Micaiah,[3] and means "Who is like Yahweh?" It may, perhaps, be interpreted as a confession of faith on the part of the prophet's parents.[4]

Contents and Outline. The book of Micah falls naturally into three parts, chapters 1, 2,[5] chapters 3 to 5, and chapters 6, 7, each part beginning with "Hear ye."[6] If the division here proposed is correct, each section contains one or more descriptions of the present corrup-

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[93] *Jonah*, p. 21.

[1] The Book of Micah occupies sixth place in the Hebrew Bible, but is found in third place in the Septuagint.

[2] Hebrew מִיכָה, *Mīkhāh*, Septuagint, Μιχαίας, *Michaias*, Vulgate, *Michæas*.

[3] The prophet is called by the longer name in Jer. 26. 18.

[4] Perhaps at a time when the worship of Yahweh seemed in danger. This, of course, cannot be proved, for names containing the name of Deity are frequent in the Old Testament, and are by no means in all cases evidence of parental piety.

[5] The common division is chapters 1 to 3, chapters 4, 5, and chapters 6, 7. To the present writer the above suggested division appears to do better justice to the contents.

[6] See 1. 2; 3. 1; 6. 1.

tion, announcements of imminent judgment, and promises of a bright and glorious future, each section, at the same time, marking an advance over the preceding section. It would, however, be erroneous to suppose that the three parts represent three connected discourses, delivered on three different occasions. They are, rather, three collections of originally independent fragments, arranged in their present order and form by a relatively late collector. The principle of arrangement is, in a broad sense, logical, the collector or collectors keeping in mind the general scheme—corruption, judgment, salvation of a remnant, promise. Within this general scheme the separate utterances were arranged more or less haphazardly and without the introduction of connecting links. As a result, abruptness in transition is not uncommon, and at times the development of the thought is not easily traced.

Title: The author and his date (1. 1).

I. Judgment upon Samaria and Judah—Salvation of a Remnant (1. 2 to 2. 13)

1. Judgment upon Samaria and Judah (1. 2-16).
   (1) Message of judgment (1. 2-7).
   (2) Lament over the devastation of Judah (1. 8-16).
2. Causes of the impending judgment (2. 1-11).
   (1) Woe upon the arrogant nobles (2. 1-4).
   (2) Futile attempts to silence the prophet (2. 5-11).
3. Return of a purified remnant (2. 12, 13).

II. Contrast Between the Present Devastation and the Future Exaltation (3. 1 to 5. 15)

1. Present corruption (3. 1-12).
   (1) Outrages committed by civil rulers (3. 1-4).
   (2) Condemnation of the mercenary prophets (3. 5-8).
   (3) Renewed condemnation of the nation's political and religious leaders (3. 9-12).

2. The Messianic outlook (4. 1 to 5. 15).
   (1) Zion the center of the universal religion of the future (4. 1-5).
   (2) Restoration and healing of the dispersed (4. 6-8).
   (3) Distress and subsequent redemption (4. 9, 10).
   (4) Deliverance of Jerusalem—destruction of the enemy (4. 11-13).
   (5) The Messiah and the Messianic era (5. 1-15).
      a. The Messiah's birth and reign (5. 1-5a).
      b. Supremacy over Assyria (5. 5b-6).
      c. The restored nation's attitude toward other nations (5. 7-9).
      d. Divine achievements for the benefit of the redeemed remnant (5. 10-15).

III. Yahweh and Israel in Controversy—The Ultimate Settlement (6. 1 to 7. 20)

1. Yahweh's complaint against Israel's ingratitude and neglect (6. 1-5).
2. The people's plea of ignorance (6. 6, 7).
3. The divine demand (6. 8).
4. Denunciation of prevalent crimes (6. 9-16).
5. Hopelessness of the nation's condition (7. 1-6).
6. Utterances dealing with the ultimate settlement of the controversy (7. 7-20).
   (1) Confidence of the penitent community (7. 7-10).
   (2) Yahweh's promise of a glorious restoration (7. 11-13).
   (3) The prophet's prayer for the fulfillment of this promise (7. 14-17).
   (4) Doxology: Ascription of praise to Yahweh, who alone is God (7. 18-20).

Integrity of the book. Until near the middle of the nineteenth century the testimony of the title ascribing the entire book to the prophet Micah, living during the latter part of the eighth century B. C., was accepted without question; and even now there are scholars who, though admitting the presence of almost insoluble difficulties and problems, continue to defend the unity of the book, with the possible exception of a few minor addi-

tions.[7] Most modern commentators, however, following in the footsteps of Ewald, deny more or less extensive portions of the book to the eighth-century prophet.[8] Four recent writers may be quoted as representatives of modern critical opinion. Cheyne declares: "One result is that in no part of chapters 4 to 7 can we venture to detect the hand of Micah. What the real Micah was must be learned from chapters 1 to 3, which are mostly genuine."[9] Nowack is slightly more conservative. He unhesitatingly

[7] J. Halévy, an ardent defender of the unity of the book, expresses his estimate of the present condition of the text in these words: "The book of Micah has reached us in a critical state even worse than that of the books of Hosea and Amos. To say nothing of internal corruptions of words, many verses, and even groups of verses have been torn from the context and inserted haphazard in passages which have no sort of suitable connection with their subject matter" (*Revue Sémitique*, XIII, 2.)

[8] Ewald assigned chapters 6, 7 to the days of Manasseh. He denied the two chapters to Micah on the following grounds: (1) chapters 1 to 5 are complete in themselves; (2) the style is different: (3) the artistic form is different; (4) the historical background is different. For a time he denied also chapters 4, 5 to Micah, but later returned to a defense of Micah's authorship of the two chapters.

[9] *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article, "Micah." In chapters 1 to 3 Cheyne is inclined to question 1. 10-15; 2. 5, 10, 12, 13; 3. 2b, 3b. The first scholar to question the whole of chapters 4, 5 was Stade (*Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, I, pp. 161-172), on the following grounds: (1) Micah would not have weakened the message of chapters 1 to 3 by adding one of entirely different import; (2) chapters 1 to 3 remind one of Isaiah, chapters 4, 5 of Deutero-Isaiah, Joel and Zech. 12 to 14; (3) chapters 4, 5 reflect postexilic conditions; (4) inconsistency and lack of connection within the chapters point to composite origin. Following Ewald, Wellhausen was the first to carry further the critical study of chapters 6, 7. He agreed with Ewald in assigning 6. 1 to 7. 6 to the reign of Manasseh, but expressed, chiefly on the basis of a difference in historical situation, the conviction that 7. 7-20 was added after the exile. In its general position this view has the support of many recent writers, but in details there is the widest possible divergence of opinion. For a clear and comprehensive survey of the history of the criticism of the book of Micah see J. M. P. Smith, *Micah*, pp. 8-16.

ascribes to Micah chapters 1 to 3, with the possible exception of 2. 12, 13; but is more skeptical regarding chapters 4 and 5: "If there are any words of Micah at all in chapters 4, 5, these can include no more than 4. 9, 10, 14; 5. 9-13." The next section, 6. 1 to 7. 6, he thinks, "might, so far as their contents are concerned, proceed from Micah, . . . but not only the tenderness of feeling exhibited in 6. 1ff., but also the dramatic and exceedingly animated descriptions, make the composition of this section by Micah very improbable." Of 7. 7-20 he says emphatically that the verses "cannot possibly be attributed to Micah."[10] Marti assigns to the eighth century Micah only 1. 5b, 6, 8, 9, 16; 2. 1-3, 4, 6-11; 3. 1, 2a, 3a, 4, 5a, 2b, 5b-8, 9, 10. These passages, he thinks, were arranged by Micah himself in the order given, which collection constituted the Micah book known in the days of Jeremiah.[11] The elements not coming from Micah, he considers a conglomerate of material from a variety of sources, all of them postexilic, chapter 7 originating as late as the second century.[12] J. M. P.

[10] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, pp. 187, 188. He assigns all the secondary elements to postexilic times, admitting, however, that the exact dates are not easily determined.

[11] Jer. 26. 18, 19.

[12] *Das Dodekapropheton*, pp. 262-264. Marti who goes beyond his predecessors in denying material to Micah distinguishes three stages in the growth of the book: (1) The original Micah book, containing the verses enumerated above, composed by Micah himself and known in the days of Jeremiah; (2) the Micah book of the fifth century, which contained, in addition to the preceding, 4. 1-4, 5; 6. 6-8; (3) the Micah book of the second century, with the exception of a few later glosses and other minor additions, practically identical with the present book. Haupt has gone even beyond Marti in his criticism of the book. He, like many of his predecessors, denies the whole of chapters 4 to 7 to the eighth-century Micah, but reveals much more confidence than they in assigning separate utterances to specific dates. All of the utterances in chapters

Smith sums up his position regarding chapters 4, 5 in these sentences: "The arguments of Stade against Micah's authorship seem irrefutable, except possibly in the case of 4. 14; 5. 9-12. . . . Furthermore, . . . it is impossible to regard the chapters as a unit in themselves; the attitude toward the heathen world, for example, is wholly different in 4. 12, 13 from that in 4. 1-4, nor is the view of the Messianic age in 5. 4, 5 consistent with that in 5. 1-3. But Stade's division of the material between two sources cannot stand. Glosses are represented by 4. 4, 5; 5. 2, 13, 14; 4. 1-4 stands alone; 4. 11-13 and 5. 6-8 reflect the same background and breathe the same spirit; the remaining sections have no close affinity with any of the preceding or with one another. The chapters thus seem to contain a miscellaneous collection of fragments gathered up from various sources, and having little in common other than a hopeful outlook for the future."[13] The same writer states his conclusions regarding chapters 6 and 7 in these words: "There is no logical unity within chapters 6 and 7; they resolve themselves into seven sections, no one of which connects closely with either its preceding or its following sections. The possibility of Micah's authorship remains open for 6. 9-16 and 7. 1-6, but is wholly excluded for the remainder. These two sections, together with 6. 1-5, might be placed in any period of Hebrew history subsequent to the appearance of the great prophets. 6. 6-8 seems to reflect the wisdom of the

4 to 7 are assigned to the Maccabean age, that is to the period between 170 and 100 B. C.; 1. 2-7 is connected with the destruction of Samaria by John Hyrcanus, in 107 B. C. Haupt assigns to Micah only 33½ lines in chapters 1 to 3. (*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, xxvi, pp. 201-252; xxvii, pp. 1-63).

[13] *Micah*, p. 12.

sages and to belong in the earlier half of the postexilic age. 7. 7-10 and 7. 14-20 come apparently both out of the same conditions; Israel is suffering but hoping, looking back with longing upon the good old days and praying for vengeance; they are best located in the later postexilic period, after the work of Nehemiah and Ezra. 7. 11-13, however, is wholly detached from its context and is to be explained as coming from the period after the fall of Jerusalem, but before the rebuilding of the city walls. The two chapters thus seem to be a collection of miscellaneous fragments, coming from widely scattered periods and from at least four different authors."[14]

Leaving aside, then, some minor passages in chapters 1 to 3, which can be discussed only in connection with a detailed exegetical study,[15] an inquiry into the integrity of the book of Micah must give special attention to 2. 12, 13, chapters 4 and 5, and chapters 6 and 7. In other words, only 1. 2 to 2. 11 and 3. 1-12 are by the majority of recent scholars admitted to have been delivered by the eighth century Micah; and, as has been pointed out, within these three chapters some scholars are inclined to question a number of verses.

The promise in 2. 12, 13 transposes the reader abruptly from the present corruption, facing imminent doom, to the future, when a remnant of the people carried into exile will be restored. Because of the abruptness of transition from verse 11 to verse 12, the relation of verses 12, 13 to their context has long been a subject of discussion. (1) Some of the church fathers and

[14] *Micah*, pp. 15, 16.

[15] See especially, J. M. P. Smith, *Micah* and K. Marti *Das Dodekapropheton.*

mediæval writers explained the verses as a continuation of the threat in verse 10, by interpreting the verbs "assemble" and "gather" as referring to a bringing together for destruction. There is nothing in the verses to warrant this interpretation. (2) Several scholars have held that the two verses embody the teaching not of Micah himself but of false prophets whom he sought to combat.[16] This view also is open to serious objections: *a.* The restoration of a remnant from exile implies a carrying into exile, the very thing the false prophets persistently deny. *b.* Verse 12 represents Yahweh as the speaker; would Micah introduce Yahweh as speaking through the false prophets, whom he condemns so severely? *c.* After all, the prophecy is a true prophecy, found, in essence, in most of the prophetic books. Is it probable that Micah would put a *true* prophecy into the mouth of a *false* prophet? (3) Recent writers, with few exceptions, consider the verses a later addition, of exilic or postexilic origin. The evidence, which to J. M. P. Smith "seems convincing," is summed up by him in these words: "The total lack of connection and the presupposition of the exile and the dispersion; the lack of any moral or religious prerequisites on Israel's part to the restoration of Yahweh's favor; the use of "remnant" to designate returning exiles; and the parallelism in phraseology and conception to late passages[17] all combine to mark the passage as late."[18] It must be admitted that

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[16] Some interpret the words as spoken by Micah himself, continuing the thought of verse 11; others regard it as a marginal note by Micah or an early reader representing the contents of a false prophecy; still others as an interruption of Micah's prophecy by false prophets themselves.

[17] For instance, Hos. 2. 2 (Hebr.); Isa. 11. 11ff.; 52. 12; Jer. 31. 8.

[18] *Micah*, p. 67.

the omission of verses 12, 13 would make the thought run more smoothly; and yet those who maintain the authorship of Micah are not without support for their contention: *a.* While on the surface the transition from verse 11 to verse 12 appears abrupt, there is a fundamental logical connection between the two verses: The people are ready to turn to a prophet who promises pleasant things.[19] This Micah cannot do; nevertheless, his message is not one of unmitigated doom; he too has salvation to proclaim, though not for the immediate future or for all. Severe judgment is all he sees ahead of him: all must be banished from the land. In exile the corrupt will be annihilated, but the loyal remnant, purified through suffering, will be assembled again by Yahweh, who will redeem it and restore it to its old home.[20] *b.* The objection based upon the alleged interruption in thought between 2. 11 and 3. 1 vanishes if chapter 3 is taken as the beginning of a new section rather than as the continuation of chapter 2.[21] *c.* If the claim that the verses presuppose the exile as already present could be established, the promise would have to be assigned to the exilic or postexilic period, but is the exile presupposed as an actual fact? The modern tendency which rejects as exilic or postexilic interpolations all promises of restoration in preexilic prophecies is not well founded.[22] It seems almost unthinkable that the prophets, with their

[19] Compare verse 11.

[20] It is not even necessary to suppose that Samaria had fallen between the time when 2. 11 was uttered and the time when the promise in 2. 12, 13 was spoken; the prophet simply looks beyond the exile threatened in 2. 3, 4.

[21] For the preferable arrangement see above, p. 471.

[22] For a fuller discussion of this question, see vol. I, pp. 137–139, and above, p. 360.

lofty conception of Yahweh, should leave the nation—good and bad alike—in the despair of exile. *d.* The linguistic argument is always precarious, and, in this particular case, far from convincing. There is nothing in the vocabulary, including the term "remnant," or in the style that points positively to a late date, and the parallelisms with expressions in the passages referred to are not of a nature to prove that the Micah passage originated at the same time. *e.* The claim that there is a lack of moral or religious prerequisites can be maintained only by separating the verses from their context. If they are allowed to remain in their present position, the verses preceding furnish the ethical note.

(4) Some scholars, not convinced by the arguments against Micah's authorship, but impressed by the looseness of connection with the context, have thought that the verses, while coming from Micah, are not now in their original position. "The entire context," says one writer, "leads me to expect after verse 11 a return to and repetition of the threat of punishment, and there can be no question that the contrast between 2. 11 and 3. 1 is greatly weakened by these two verses. To deny them to Micah we have no reason, but it is possible that they may have been transposed from another context. Their original place might have been after 4. 8, preparing the way for chapter 5, but separated from it by 4. 9-14, which verses look back to the present." The present writer hesitates to speak dogmatically; but it seems to him (1) that there is nothing in the contents of the verses to point conclusively to a late date, and (2) that most of the difficulties vanish if we keep in mind that the present book of Micah consists of a considerable number of brief notes or summaries of the prophet's discourses delivered during

his entire prophetic career, and brought together on the basis of principles not now clearly discernible.

Chapters 4 and 5, with the possible exception of a few verses, have been denied to Micah chiefly on two grounds: (1) the "strange" and "frequent" juxtaposition of Messianic hopes and announcements of judgment is said to weaken the message of the prophet; hence, he cannot be held responsible for it. (2) It is pointed out that mutually exclusive views present themselves in these chapters,[23] that in several instances a connection can be established only by artificial or forced means,[24] that in these chapters ideas find expression which were not current until after the time of Micah,[25] and that certain relationships are presupposed which are foreign to Micah's era.[26]

An adequate, detailed consideration of the problems raised by the utterances in the two chapters would require more space than is available in a work of this kind; consequently, nothing more than a general discussion is possible here.[27] The first objection is raised also against all similar passages in other prophetic books;[28] but as soon as we admit that the preexilic prophets entertained hopes of the preservation of a remnant, the difficulty vanishes almost completely; for the promises are held out, not to the entire people, but to this remnant. If the doctrine of the remnant cannot be removed from the utterances of

[23] Compare 4. 6-8 with 4. 9, 10; 4. 11-13 with 5. 1; 5. 2-4 with 5. 5ff.

[24] Compare 4. 4 with 4. 5; 4. 8 with 4. 9, 10; 4. 11-13 with 5. 1-4.

[25] Compare 4. 11-13 with Ezek. 38, 39.

[26] For example, 4. 6-8; 5. 1ff.

[27] For a detailed discussion of the commonly accepted view see especially the commentaries by Nowack, Marti, and Smith; for the view here set forth the present writer's commentary on the *Minor Prophets*.

[28] See vol. I, pp. 137–139.

the other eighth-century prophets, why may it not have been an element in Micah's religious thinking? But if Micah accepted the doctrine, the presence of these ideal pictures of the future in his utterances cannot appear strange; on the contrary, it would be more surprising not to find them. When it is further borne in mind that the two chapters are a collection of short oracles, all dealing with the same subject, namely, the Messianic outlook, but not coming from the same period of the prophet's activity, and describing the ideal future and the events leading up to it from different points of view, suggested by the ever-changing historical background, the first objection loses practically all its force. The second objection, or series of objections, would have considerable weight if it were necessary to take chapters 4 and 5 as containing one continuous discourse, delivered at one and the same time; but as soon as it is recognized that the chapters are made up of many oracles, delivered at different times, in different circumstances, growing out of different historical situations, the objections lose their force, unless it can be shown that individual oracles reveal linguistic, historical, or religious features that militate against belief in Micah's authorship. Some believe such evidence is found; to the present writer, however, it seems that the arguments stressed by recent writers lose their alleged conclusiveness when the individual utterances are properly interpreted.[29]

In the discussion of chapters 6 and 7 at least two

[29] For details see the author's commentary on the *Minor Prophets*, pp. 396ff. Steuernagel differentiates within the two chapters (1) the sections containing threats, which he assigns to Micah, and (2) the sections containing promises which, with the possible exception of 5. 1, 3 and 4, 5 (Hebr.) he regards as later additions (*Einleitung*, pp. 626, 627).

divisions must be recognized, 6. 1 to 7. 6 and 7. 7-20.[30] As has been pointed out, some recent writers deny the two chapters in their entirety to Micah, while others are ready to recognize at least the possibility of retaining parts of 6. 1 to 7. 6 as the work of Micah or of an eighth-century contemporary.[31] The objections to 6. 1 to 7. 6 in whole or in part are based chiefly on differences in style and greater intensity of emotion. But these differences are by no means so marked as to exclude unity of authorship. True, the conditions reflected in these verses are not the same as those presupposed in chapters 1 to 3, but if the testimony of the title in 1. 1 can at all be relied upon the prophet lived through a period during which political as well as moral and social changes were frequent. If we assume that the utterances in 6. 1 to 7. 6 come from a time when corruption was especially widespread, the depth of feeling is easily accounted for; the more intense feeling would inspire more earnest and passionate appeals, which, in turn, would influence language and style.

Most writers who advocate the genuineness of 6. 1 to 7. 6 follow Ewald in assigning the verses to the dark reign of Manasseh; but such a late date is by no means certain. Steuernagel is inclined to throw the utterance back into the eighth century, and Kirkpatrick may be right in saying: "Chapter 6, at any rate, is a piece of

[30] Each of the two sections may be subdivided into smaller fragments; but the process of disintegration has been carried to extremes by some modern writers.

[31] Nowack admits that so far as contents are concerned the whole of 6. 1 to 7. 6 might have proceeded from Micah; J. M. P. Smith admits the possibility of Micah's authorship for 6. 9-16 and 7. 1-6; Steuernagel can see no good reason for denying any part of 6. 1 to 7. 6 to the eighth-century prophet.

public preaching which is more likely to belong to the time of Ahaz than to that of Manasseh, when the true prophets were silenced."[32] A few comparisons will show that the reign of Ahaz furnishes a most suitable occasion: Ahaz was inclined toward the worship of foreign deities;[33] the complaint of Yahweh in 6. 1ff. implies that the people were forsaking him. Ahaz caused his son to pass through the fire,[34] which incident may be reflected in 6. 7. Ahaz walked "in the ways of the kings of Israel";[35] 6. 17 complains: "The statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels."[36]

Modern opinion regarding the origin of 7. 7-20 is practically unanimous in favor of a late date. Wellhausen says: "Between 7. 6 and 7. 7 there yawns a century." Nowack is equally emphatic: "7. 7ff. cannot possibly be attributed to Micah." Marti, following Stade's suggestion, divides 7. 7-20 into two sections, 7-13, 18b, 19a, and 14-18a, 19b, 20 and assigns both sections to the second century B. C. J. M. P. Smith dates 7. 7-10 and 14-20 after the work of Nehemiah and Ezra, and 7. 11-13 after the fall of Jerusalem, but before the rebuilding of the walls. G. A. Smith, on the whole more conservative than the other scholars named, calls 7. 7-20 "a canto of several fragments, from periods far apart in the history of Israel."

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[32] *Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 234.

[33] 2 Kings 16. 10ff.

[34] 2 Kings 16. 3.

[35] 2 Kings 16. 3.

[36] To the reign of Jotham, only a year or two before Ahaz' accession belong the prophecies in Isa. 2 to 5 (see vol. I, pp. 190, 191); and it may be of interest to compare Mic. 7. 1-6 with Isa. 3. 1-15; especially Mic. 7. 5, 6 with Isa. 3. 5; compare also Mic. 7. 4 with Isa. 10. 3.

The arguments in favor of a late date are: (1) The difference in the historical situation—Zion is fallen,[37] it bears the indignation of Yahweh,[38] its walls are broken down,[39] its inhabitants are scattered.[40] Beyond the present distress the speaker sees a glorious restoration—the divine favor will be restored,[41] the walls will be rebuilt,[42] the exiles will be brought back from the ends of the earth.[43] Of significance also is the contrast between the moral and spiritual condition of the people described in verses 1-6 and the humility and confidence expressed in the succeeding verses. True, the picture of distress accompanied by an expectation of restoration and exaltation does not necessarily point to the actual presence of the calamity;[44] but in this case the details of the description and the particular expressions used favor an exilic or postexilic date.[45] (2) Though in most instances the argument from style carries little weight, in this case it is not without significance. Even the reader of the English translation is impressed by the marked differences as he passes from 7. 6 to 7. 7ff. Of course a change in style might be expected when an author passes from exhortation to supplication or praise; but

[37] Verse 8.
[38] Verse 9
[39] Verse 11.
[40] Verse 12
[41] Verse 9
[42] Verse 11.
[43] Verse 12.
[44] See above, p. 484.
[45] From verse 12 it has been inferred that when the words were spoken Assyria was the world power, and in verse 14 has been seen an allusion to the ravaging of the territory north of Esdraelon and east of the Jordan in 734 B. C. by Tiglath-pileser IV; but the references are not sufficiently specific to be conclusive.

the more closely one studies 7. 7-20, the stronger becomes the impression that the differences in style are too great to be compatible with unity of authorship, and the firmer becomes the conviction that either Micah was a man of peculiarly vivid imagination, of unusual poetic genius, and wonderful dramatic power or the verses cannot come from him. On the whole, the evidence against the originality of 7. 7-20 seems more conclusive than in the case of any other part of the book; probably the section consists of three originally independent fragments,[46] all of them of exilic or postexilic origin.

On the basis of the preceding discussion the present writer believes the following conclusions to be warranted: (1) There is insufficient reason for questioning Micah's authorship[47] of 1. 2-16; 2. 1-11; 3. 1-12; 4. 9, 10; 5. 1, 10-14. (2) Though the arguments are less conclusive, there is much to be said in favor of retaining for the eighth-century prophet the following passages, aside from minor modifications and expansions, 2. 12, 13; the remaining portions of chapters 4 and 5;[48] 6. 1 to 7. 6. (3) The closing section, 7. 7-20, does not come from Micah; it may be, in the language of G. A. Smith, "a canto of several fragments, from periods far apart in the history of Israel."[49]

Life and Times of Micah. Of the family of Micah

[46] Verses 7-10, 11-13, and 14-20.

[47] This does not exclude the possibility of minor alterations having been made when the various fragments were collected into the present book.

[48] For a more detailed discussion of 4. 1-5, the greater part of which is found also in Isa. 2. 2-4 + 5, see vol. I, pp. 129–132.

[49] Various efforts have been made to trace in detail the literary history of the book, but in view of the uncertainty concerning the origin of individual sections, the conclusions must be regarded as more or less arbitrary.

nothing is known; the omission of the father's name may be an indication of humble parentage. In 1. 1 the prophet is called the "Morashtite," that is, an inhabitant of Moresheth, which may be identical with Moresheth-gath in 1. 14.[50] The exact location of this village is not yet determined, though a location near the Philistine city of Gath is suggested by the name given in 1. 14.[51] The only passage outside of the book of Micah making mention of the prophet is Jer. 26. 18, 19; from which it appears that Micah was, at least in part, responsible for the reformation under Hezekiah. Of the later life of Micah nothing is known. Some think that his activity continued into the dark reign of Manasseh,[52] when he may have suffered a martyr's death.

The exact time and duration of Micah's prophetic activity are not easily fixed. According to the title in 1. 1, added by the collector of the Minor Prophets, Micah was active during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, that is, between about 740 and 700 B. C. That Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah is affirmed also in Jer. 26. 18, 19, where Mic. 3. 12 is quoted. The words quoted are so closely connected with the preceding verses that verse 12 undoubtedly carries with it the rest of chapter 3; moreover, certain striking similarities between the latter and chapters 1, 2 place it beyond doubt that the substance of the three chapters reflects the same general period. Furthermore, internal evidence, for

[50] The name of the home town may have been added to distinguish the eighth-century Micah from an older prophet Micaiah (1 Kings 22. 8ff.), and from the numerous other persons bearing the same name.

[51] Jerome refers to it as a small village near Eleutheropolis, about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem, in the lowlands of Judah, near the Philistine border.

[52] See above, pp. 483, 484.

instance, 1. 6, suggests that the opening verses belong to the years immediately preceding or following the fall of Samaria, in 722 B. C. If the capital of the northern kingdom fell in the sixth year of Hezekiah,[53] internal evidence would seem to support the testimony of the title and of Jer. 26. 18, 19, that Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah. There is less evidence to show that he prophesied during the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz.[54]

The political, social, moral, and religious conditions in Judah during the prophetic career of Micah were essentially the same as the conditions reflected in the prophecies of his older contemporary Isaiah.[55] Of the two prophets Isaiah views the situation from the stand-

[53] 2 Kings 18. 10. The chronology of Judah during the latter part of the eighth century B. C. is very obscure. If we follow 2 Kings 18. 9, 10 Hezekiah began to reign about 728; if, on the other hand, we follow 2 Kings 18. 13 (see vol. I, p. 188), his reign must have begun about 715 B. C. There is no indication of a coregency, and apparently the two statements are irreconcilable. Accepting the earlier dates, we may tentatively date the three rulers named in the title as follows: Jotham, 740-735, Ahaz, 735-728, Hezekiah, 728-697. (See further, Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article, "Chronology.")

[54] Unless we assume, what is quite possible (see preceding note), that Hezekiah did not come to the throne until 715, or, that 6. 1 to 7. 6 come from the reign of Ahaz (see above, p. 484).

[55] For a description of these conditions see above, vol. I, pp. 195–198. Very similar were conditions in Israel during the prophetic activity of Amos and Hosea (see above, pp. 419–422). Since certain prophecies of the book (6. 1 to 7. 6) are thought by some scholars to come from the days of Manasseh, a few words may be added concerning the reign of Hezekiah's successor. According to 2 Kings 21. 1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and ruled fifty-five years. Under him the political life of Judah seems to have remained unchanged. Probably he continued to pay tribute to the Assyrian kings, though 2 Chron. 23. 11 states that he brought upon himself the displeasure of the king of Assyria and was carried in chains to Babylon. Manasseh seems to have been an opponent of the pure and spiritual Yahweh religion proclaimed by the eighth-century prophets, and under him a great religious reaction swept over Judah.

point of the patrician, the man of the city, Micah from the point of view of the humble peasant from an obscure country village.

Foremost among the evils seen by Micah was the greed of the nobles manifesting itself in the attempts to build up large estates by forcibly ejecting smaller property holders.[56] The judges seem to have been quite willing to assist their powerful friends in robbing the weak;[57] widows and orphans, without powerful defenders, were cruelly robbed and plundered, and even sold into slavery.[58] Creditors were without mercy, and the common people were oppressed by excessive taxation, that the magnificent palaces of the capital might be erected.[59] Every man's hand seems to have been against his neighbor; even the most sacred relations of life were disregarded.[60] Like the other prophets, Micah held the nobles chiefly responsible for the awful moral and social corruption. He likened them to cannibals, who tear the flesh of the people from their bones and eat it.[61] Their greed and rapacity know no limits; like highway robbers they pounce upon passers-by and strip off their garments;[62] helpless women and children are their special prey;[63] decisions are given in favor of the one offering the largest bribe.[64]

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[56] 2. 1, 2.

[57] 3. 11.

[58] 2. 9.

[59] 3. 10.

[60] The terrible conditions are vividly described in 7. 5, 6, though these verses may not come from Micah himself.

[61] 3. 3.

[62] 2. 8.

[63] 2. 9.

[64] It may be of interest to compare with the verses referred to Isa. 2. 6 to 5. 24 and 9. 8 to 10. 4.

Concerning religious conditions Micah says less than the other eighth-century prophets, but his few remarks on the subject confirm the statements of his greater contemporary Isaiah. Religion had become a matter of form; ceremonial observances were thought to meet all religious requirements, and the misapprehension was widespread that, so long as the external acts of worship were scrupulously performed, the people were entitled to the divine favor and protection.[65] From the utterances of Isaiah it appears that the worship of other gods was not uncommon.[66] True, Hezekiah is credited with a thorough religious reform, but the actual changes were hardly as sweeping as 2 Kings 18. 4 seems to suggest. At any rate, a century later, in the days of Josiah, there were still found in the city of Jerusalem, and its vicinity, high places erected by Solomon centuries before the time of Hezekiah.[67] Surely, amid these conditions the task of a prophet was not an easy one.

Teaching of Micah. The teaching of Micah is simple and forceful. In many respects he resembles his eighth-century contemporaries, Amos,[68] Hosea,[69] and Isaiah.[70] A few points, however, deserve special mention: Micah

[65] 3. 11; compare also 6. 6, 7.

[66] Isa. 2. 8; and compare, for the reign of Ahaz, 2 Kings 16. 10ff.

[67] 2 Kings 23. 13. Under Manasseh the idols torn down by Hezekiah were restored, the Asherim were again set up, and the enchanters and soothsayers exercised their former influence (2 Kings 21. 6); even human sacrifice was offered (2 Kings 21. 6; compare 16. 3). The worship of other deities was introduced into the Temple itself, those of Assyria receiving first place (2 Kings 21. 3, 5; 23. 11, 12). The popular worship of Judah at this time must have been a strange combination of foreign and native cults.

[68] See above, pp. 425–430.

[69] See above, pp. 377–380.

[70] See vol. I, pp. 202-208.

insists on the holiness of Yahweh and the righteousness of his government. As long as Yahweh's people do right they will enjoy the divine favor;[71] when they turn against him they must suffer punishment: Yahweh's good will is secured not by carefully observing the ritual, but by living in harmony with the principles of righteousness, by diligently practicing kindness and brotherliness, and by maintaining a living fellowship with God in the spirit of humility.[72]

The prophet did not deceive himself into an expectation that his lofty moral and religious ideals would prove sufficiently attractive to bring about a complete transformation in the nation's life. He foresaw that the majority would continue in rebellion, and that, therefore, punishment must fall, resulting in the destruction of the national existence of both Israel and Judah. In the opinion of the present writer,[73] Micah saw with equal clearness that a remnant would be saved, and that this remnant would enjoy a life of permanent peace and prosperity under an ideal ruler.[74] Through the moral influence proceeding from the remnant[75] the knowledge of Yahweh would spread to other nations, many of whose citizens would be drawn to him.[76]

A comparison of Micah with his greater contemporary, Isaiah, is not without interest. The two "resemble each other in style, in thought, in topics, and even in phrases"; yet the contrasts between the two in origin, training, and

[71] 2. 7.

[72] 6. 6-8; these verses, however, are denied by some to Micah; see above, pp. 474–477.

[73] See above, p. 482.

[74] Especially, chapters 4 and 5.

[75] 5. 7.

[76] 4. 2.

sphere of activity are equally marked. The one was a city prophet, of high social standing, and the counselor of kings; the other was a simple countryman, born of obscure parents, and in close touch and sympathy with the peasant class. However, both cherished lofty conceptions of the character of Yahweh and of the obligations resting upon his people, and both were inspired by clearly defined convictions concerning the nature and ultimate triumph of the rule of Yahweh upon earth.

7. The Book of Nahum

Name. The name נַחוּם, *Naḥūm,*[1] occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament,[2] but is not uncommon in the Mishna, and is found in Jewish ossuaries and in Phœnician inscriptions. Coming from a root expressing the idea of consolation, it probably means "the bringer of consolation," "the consoler."[3] It is, therefore, symbolical of the message of the book, which is intended to comfort the afflicted and oppressed people of Judah.

Contents and Outline. The utterances of Nahum center around a single theme—the destruction of Nineveh. The specific announcement of the doom of the Assyrian capital is preceded by a proclamation of the twofold character of Yahweh: he is a God of vengeance and of mercy.[4] The divine wrath is about to mani-

[1] Septuagint, Ναούμ; Vulgate, *Nahum.*

[2] It occurs in 2 Esdr. 1. 40; Luke 3. 25; compare also Josephus, *Antiquities,* IX, 11, 3.

[3] Some prefer the translation "consolation"; but an abstract noun is less suitable as a name. Perhaps the name is an abbreviation of נַחוּמְיָהוּ or נַחוּמְאֵל, "Yahweh" of "God is the bringer of consolation."

[4] 1. 2-6.

fest itself in the overthrow of Judah's cruel enemy—Assyria; the divine mercy, in the restoration of the excellency of Judah.[5] Chapter 2 deals almost entirely with the assault upon Nineveh and the sack of the city: An army summoned by Yahweh will capture the city, plunder, and destroy it,[6] so that it will disappear completely. In the next utterance the prophet once more pronounces a woe upon the corrupt and bloody city, which deserves the threatened fate because of the "multitude of her whoredoms." Nineveh may boast in her power and her strong defenses, but they will avail nothing: city and inhabitants will be utterly cut off.[7]

Title: The prophet and the subject of the prophecy (1. 1)

I. Decree of Nineveh's Doom (1. 2-15)

1. Yahweh a God of vengeance and of mercy (1. 2, 3).
2. Terribleness of the divine anger (1. 4-6).
3. Overthrow of Nineveh; rejoicing in Zion (1. 7-15).
   (1) Yahweh a stronghold of the faithful (1. 7).
   (2) Yahweh the pursuer of his enemies (1. 8).
   (3) Yahweh's faithfulness in the present crisis (1. 9, 10).
   (4) Justification of the decree against Nineveh (1. 11).
   (5) Deliverance of Judah (1. 12, 13).
   (6) Destruction of Assyria (1. 14).
   (7) Rejoicing on Mount Zion (1. 15).

II. Siege and Destruction of Nineveh (2. 1-13)

1. Assault upon Nineveh; sack of the city (2. 1-10).
   (1) Approach of the enemy (2. 1).
   (2) Humiliation of Nineveh—a preparation for the exaltation of Judah (2. 2).
   (3) Furious onslaught of the hostile army (2. 3, 4).
   (4) Hopelessness of resistance (2. 5, 6).
   (5) Capture of the queen and her attendants (2. 7).

[5] 1. 7-15; 2. 2.
[6] 2. 1-13.
[7] 3. 1-19.

(6) Flight of the people (2. 8).
(7) Sack of the city (2. 9, 10).
2. Exultation of the prophet over the city's destruction (2. 11-13).

III. Nineveh's Vices and Inevitable Doom (3. 1-19)

1. Nineveh's doom a retribution for outrages against other nations (3. 1-7).
(1) Woe upon the corrupt and bloody city (3. 1).
(2) Clatter of the chariots, glitter of the arms (3. 2, 3).
(3) Lack of pity in the time of distress (3. 4-7).
2. Fate of No Amon to be the fate of Nineveh (3. 8-11).
3. Inability of Nineveh's resources to save the city (3. 12-19).
(1) Fall of the outlying strongholds (3. 12, 13).
(2) Siege and destruction of the city (3. 14-19a).
(3) Universal exultation over the fall of Nineveh (3. 19b).

Unity and Integrity. The first question regarding the unity of the book of Nahum was raised by Gunkel as late as 1893;[8] but since that time scholars in ever-increasing numbers have denied the originality of practically the whole of chapter 1 and of several verses in the remaining chapters. The change in attitude is closely bound up with the alleged discovery, in chapter 1, of distorted remnants of an old alphabetic acrostic. In his commentary on Psa. 9, Franz Delitzsch, following a suggestion of "Pastor Frohnmeyer of Wuertemberg," remarks: "Even the prophet does not disdain, as is evident from Nah. 1. 3-7, to allow the sequence of the letters of the alphabet to have an influence upon the arrangement of his thought." Following this clue, Gustav Bickell, who deserves much credit for his efforts to bring about a better understanding of Hebrew poetry, has at various times between 1880 and 1894 attempted restorations of

[8] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1893, pp. 223-244. In 1814 Berthold asserted that the three chapters were independent of one another and that they were separated by slight intervals of time; however, he did not question unity of authorship.

the ancient poem.[9] Other scholars have undertaken, each in his own way, the solution of the problem, among them Gunkel,[10] Wellhausen,[11], Nowack,[12] Happel,[13] Gray,[14] Cheyne,[15] Arnold,[16] Marti,[17] Haupt,[18] Duhm,[19] J. M. P. Smith,[20] and others.

That the subject is one of grave difficulty and that the manifold conclusions are not altogether beyond question may be seen from the following two quotations. Arnold characterizes the several efforts, apart from his own, in these words: "Starting with a bald assumption as to the main point at issue, conjecture has been substituted for conjecture in matters of detail, and not the slightest endeavor made to justify the hypothesis or conjecture by reference to observed facts."[21] Of all the scholars who have made a detailed study of the subject G. B. Gray approaches the problem with the greatest

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[9] Especially in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesell-Schaft*, 1880, pp. 559ff.; *Zeitschrift fuer Katholische Theologie*, 1886, pp. 550ff.; *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien*, 1894, Abhandlung V.

[10] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1893, pp. 223ff. Compare also *Schoepfung und Chaos*, pp. 102, 103.

[11] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, Commentary on *Nahum*.

[12] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, Commentary on *Nahum*. The second edition reveals some changes from the first.

[13] *Der Psalm Nahums kritisch Untersucht*, and *Das Buch des Propheten Nahum Erklaert*.

[14] *Expositor*, 1898, pp. 207-220.

[15] *Critica Biblica*, II, pp. 164-169.

[16] A very exhaustive study of "The Composition of Nah. 1-2. 3," *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1901, pp. 225-265.

[17] *Das Dodekapropheton*, Commentary on *Nahum*.

[18] *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft*, 1907, pp. 275-297; also *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1907, pp. 1-53.

[19] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1911, pp. 100-107.

[20] *Nahum* (International Critical Commentary).

[21] This criticism applies with equal justice to the discussion of Arnold.

caution, and his general conclusion is: "We must, therefore, distinguish between the proof that Nahum contains traces of an acrostic which, when the evidence is duly presented, is cogent, and certain details of reconstruction, which are requisite if an entire acrostic is to be restored, but for which the evidence is in one or two cases strong, in many slight, and in some *nil.*"

Without going into details, the present writer may be permitted to make the following general statements:[22] In 1. 2-7 there are unquestionable traces of an alphabetic acrostic, but even here the artistic arrangement is not carried through consistently; in the rest of the chapter the evidence is slight. "The first nine verses," says Kennedy, "have suffered little, the next four or five considerably more, and the rest so much that their restoration can never be more than an academic exercise."[23] In other words, in order to restore the acrostic it becomes necessary, at least from verse 7 on, to treat the text with much freedom: words must be inserted or omitted, words and even clauses must be transposed; sometimes a passage must be entirely rewritten. In the presence of such difficulties and uncertainties the differences of opinion among those who have attempted reconstructions are not surprising; nor is it strange that some scholars hesitate to accept as correct any of the numerous reconstructions attempted, or that they doubt even the possibility of restoring, with any degree of confidence, the original

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[22] Limitation of space does not permit a detailed discussion here. The following three discussions give a very good idea of the problem and of the more important solutions attempted: Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article, "*Nahum*"; Expositor, 1898, pp. 207-220; *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1901, pp. 225-265.

[23] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article, "Nahum."

acrostic.[24] On the whole, the evidence points conclusively to the presence of an original acrostic, in whole or in part; but one may agree with Marti in being content with the reconstruction of 1. 2-10 and in the admission that the rest is irrecoverable.

A comparison of 1. 2 to 2. 2[25] in the American Revised Version with the following, which reproduces the entire acrostic as reconstructed by Nowack may be of interest:[26]

2. א A God jealous and avenging is Yahweh,
An avenger and full of wrath is Yahweh.
3c. ב In storm and tempest is his way,
Clouds and dust are at his feet.
4. ג He rebuketh the sea, so that it drieth up,
And he maketh dry all the rivers;
ד Bashan and Carmel languish,
And the flower of Lebanon withereth.
5. ה Mountains quake because of him,
And the hills do melt.
ו The earth becometh desolate before him.
The world with all that dwell therein.
6. ז Who can endure his indignation?
Who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?
ח His wrath is poured out like fire,
And rocks are kindled by him.
7. ט Good is Yahweh toward those who trust in him,
A stronghold in the day of trouble.
י Yahweh knoweth those who trust in him
8. And in the overflowing flood he delivereth them.
כ An utter end he maketh of his adversaries,
And his enemies he thrusteth out into darkness.
9c. ל Not twice he taketh vengeance on his adversaries,
9b. An utter end he maketh of them forever.
9a. מ What think ye of Yahweh?

[24] For instance, A. B. Davidson, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*; S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, "Nahum."

[25] Except 2. 1, which, followed by 2. 3, is regarded by Nowack as the opening sentence of Nahum's genuine prophecy.

[26] Wherever possible, the wording of the American Revised Version has been retained.

3a. Yahweh is slow to anger and great in loving-kindness.
2c. נ An avenger is Yahweh against his adversaries,
And he reserveth wrath for his enemies;
10. ס Like plucked-up thorns they are swept away,
Like dry grass they are withered.
12. ע The arrogance of tyrants is like high water,
But soon it subsides and disappears.
פ I humble thee, and I will humble thee not again,
13. Now I will break in pieces thy staff.
14. צ Yahweh hath given commandment concerning thee;
Thy name shall be remembered no more;
ק Thy grave I will make an object of disgust (?),
Graven and molten images I will cut off,
15. ר The feet of him that bringeth good tidings are upon the mountains;
Behold! He publisheth peace.
2. 2. ש Yahweh restoreth the vine branch to Jacob,
Yea, he delighteth in the excellency of Israel,
ת To compensate, because emptiers have emptied it,
They have destroyed its vine branches.[27]

The artificial character of acrostic poetry is generally supposed to point to a late date; hence, those who believe that chapter 1 was originally an alphabetic poem consider it an exilic or postexilic production which was, at a still later date, prefixed to the genuine prophecies of Nahum. In support of this contention the following additional considerations are advanced: (1) The historical background of chapter 1 is not clearly defined, which gives a certain vagueness to the contents, while the utterances in chapters 2 and 3 are definite and to the point. The latter announce judgment upon an historical foe of Judah, while the poem speaks of a world judgment. (2) Some derive support for a late date from the language and style of the poem. Thus Gunkel finds

[27] No doubt, the reconstruction of Nowack results in a smoother and more poetic text; but is there sufficient warrant for the liberties taken with the present Hebrew text?

a want of originality in language and style, and "many touches that betray connection not only with the psalms but with late eschatological literature." (3) "The theological and abstract nature of the thought of 1. 2ff. is strikingly different from that of the concrete and vivid tableaux of chapters 2 and 3." (4) The eschatological and apocalyptic character of chapter 1 distinguishes the acrostic poem from the definite announcement of political and military disaster in the remaining two chapters. Of course arguments of this kind are never absolutely conclusive,[28] and yet, on the whole, the evidence makes diversity of authorship and a late date for the acrostic underlying chapter 1 more than probable.[29] Questions have been raised regarding a few other passages,[30] but in

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[28] G. A. Smith is one of the few modern writers who hesitate to commit themselves definitely on the point. "Therefore," says he, "while it is possible that a later poem has been prefixed to the genuine prophecies of Nahum, and the first chapter supplies many provocations to belief in such a theory, this has not been proved, and the above essays of proof have much against them. The question is open."

[29] The manner and time of connecting the acrostic with the rest of the book are obscure. Some have thought that the poem as it now stands was written as an introduction to Nahum; others, that it was originally written for that purpose, but was thoroughly revised at a later date; still others hold that the editor responsible for its present position made use of a poem that he found ready at hand. On the whole, the last mentioned hypothesis appears the most probable. Arnold accounts for the corrupt condition of the poem in its present form by assuming that the editor repeated it from memory, that he forgot the fact that it was an acrostic as well as the original order and contents of the latter part.

[30] 3. 18, 19 is questioned because (1) it is thought to presuppose the fall of Nineveh as an accomplished fact and (2) it differs from its context in meter and strophic arrangement; 2. 14 to 3. 7 has been thought to have undergone a thorough working over, because (1) it is suspected of having been written originally in elegiac meter, and (2) the theological coloring is thought to have been influenced by Ezekiel.

these cases the suspicions appear to be less well founded. The same judgment must be passed upon the attempts of Happel and Haupt to reconstruct the book upon the basis of an entirely subjective criticism.[31]

Date of Nahum's Activity.[32] The date of Nahum's activity must be determined from the contents of his prophecies. The earliest possible date is suggested in 3. 8ff., which refers to the destruction of No Amon, the Egyptian Thebes, as an accomplished fact. The catastrophe alluded to can be no other than the capture of Thebes by Ashurbanapal, king of Assyria, about 663-661 B. C. The lower limit is the date of the destruction of Nineveh, for while the tone of the entire prophecy implies that the destruction is imminent, clearly it is still in the future. Nineveh fell in 607/606 B. C.; hence the activity of Nahum must be placed between 663 and 607 B. C.[33]

Can the date be fixed more definitely? The vividness of the description of the fall of No Amon has led some to favor a date soon after that catastrophe, while the realistic picture of Nineveh's distress has caused others to select a date just prior to the city's doom.[34] One thing

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[31] See references in notes 13 and 18 above.

[32] The date of the alphabetic acrostic cannot be definitely fixed. It is undoubtedly postexilic, but it is by no means certain that it should be carried down to the Maccabean age.

[33] Happel and Haupt both assign Nahum to the Maccabean age. Such a late date may not be impossible for the acrostic in chapter 1, but for the rest of the book it is out of the question: (1) It is not probable that an entirely new book could be introduced into the prophetic canon after 180 B. C. (Compare Ecclesiasticus 48. 20-25; 49. 6, 8, 10.) (2) Internal evidence is against so late a date.

[34] For instance, Strack, about 660, Rogers and Koenig, about 650, Kirkpatrick, soon after 640, Cornill 624, G. A. Smith, 625 or 608, Nowack, Marti, Davidson, J. M. P. Smith, and most recent writers, during the years immediately preceding the fall of Nineveh in 606.

seems clear from the contents, namely, that at the time the words were uttered Nineveh was experiencing some grave danger. Now, during the latter half of the seventh century Nineveh passed through two, or possibly three, serious crises: (1) About 650-648 B. C., during the revolt of Shamashshumukin, king of Babylon, against his brother Ashurbanapal, king of Assyria. (2) About 625 B. C., when, according to Herodotus,[35] Nineveh was threatened by the Medes.[36] (3) About 607/606 B. C., when Nineveh, after a siege of two years, was taken and destroyed.

The first crisis does not offer a suitable occasion, for at that time Nineveh itself was never in danger. The Assyrian king found it an easy task to drive the rebels back into their own land, where he inflicted a crushing defeat upon them. There is much uncertainty connected with the crisis of 625, and while there may be insufficient reason for questioning the historicity of the attack,[37] there is insufficient evidence either to prove or to disprove that the advance of the Scythians offers a suitable occasion.

During the closing years of Ashurbanapal's reign[38] the Assyrian empire began slowly to disintegrate. After his death the end approached more rapidly. In 625 Nabo-

[35] I. 102ff.

[36] The invaders should, perhaps, be identified with the *Umman manda* of the Assyrian inscriptions, that is, barbarian hordes, commonly called Scythians, that threatened the integrity of the Assyrian empire as early as the reign of Esarhaddon, 681-668 B. C. While these peoples are not identical with the Medes, they represent a later invasion of the same race, and they may have been joined by the more settled Medes in the attack. The similarity of *Manda* and *Mede* may be responsible for Herodotus' statement that the Medes made the attack.

[37] Wellhausen, Nowack, Marti, etc.

[38] 668-626 B. C.

polassar, one of the military leaders of Ashurbanapal, established an independent kingdom in Babylon. With the Scythians pressing from the north and the new Babylonian power from the south, Assyria was in serious peril. Finally, Nabopolassar entered into an alliance with the *Umman manda,* including the Medes, and together they marched against Nineveh. The united forces met determined resistance, the struggle continuing for two years; but at last a breach was made in the northeast corner of the wall, the city was taken, plundered, and burned. With the fall of the capital the Assyrian world power came to an end. Judah having suffered much from the proud Assyrian, it is not difficult to understand how, with the doom of the capital city imminent, a prophet-patriot might burst into shouts of exultation and triumph over the distress of the cruel foe. Evidently, the years immediately preceding the final overthrow of the city, 608-606 B. C., offer the most suitable occasion for Nahum's utterances.[39]

The Prophet's Home. Of the life of Nahum practically nothing is known. He is called, in 1. 1, the *Elkoshite,* which undoubtedly means that he came from a place *Elkosh,*[40] just as *Morashtite*[41] means a citizen of *Moresheth;* but there is much diversity of opinion as to the location of the prophet's home: 1. It has been identified with a modern village, *Elkush* or *Alkosh,* not far from the left bank of the Tigris, two days' journey north

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[39] Since Nahum's prophecy deals exclusively with the fall of Nineveh, it is not necessary to consider conditions in Judah in this connection (see vol. I, pp. 302–305.

[40] The term has been interpreted as meaning "of the family of Elkosh," but this is a less probable interpretation.

[41] Mic. 1. 1; see above, p. 487.

of the site of ancient Nineveh.[42] If this village or its predecessor upon the same site was the home of Nahum, the prophet must be regarded as a descendant of one of the northern families carried into exile in 722/721 B. C. In addition to the similarity in name, the prophet's accurate knowledge of Nineveh and of things Assyrian is urged in favor of this identification.[43] However, the evidence is by no means conclusive: (1) The knowledge of Nineveh is not so minute that the prophet could not have acquired it without actually living in Assyria;[44] that country was sufficiently well known in Palestine during the seventh century B. C. to enable any careful observer endowed with a poetic genius to draw the vivid pictures contained in chapters 2 and 3. (2) The tradition connecting Nahum with the Assyrian village cannot be traced beyond the sixteenth century A. D.; indeed, all references to the place itself are later than the seventh century A. D. (3) There is not the slightest hint anywhere in the book that the author was a descendant of a northern family. His whole interest centers in Judah.[45] Evidently, a comparatively late age is responsible for connecting Nahum with the Assyrian village, because of

[42] A description of the village and of the alleged tomb of Nahum is found in H. A. Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, I, p. 197.

[43] He uses Assyrian words (3. 17), is well acquainted with the capital city—its brick walls (3. 15), the river gates (2. 6), its temples and images (1. 14), its immense wealth (2. 9, 12), its vast population (2. 8; 3. 15), the crowd of merchants (3. 16), etc. From a resident of a neighboring village, a frequent visitor to Nineveh, all this would sound very natural. It is not strange, therefore, that several scholars, especially assyriologists like Friedrich Delitzsch and Jeremias, should consider the Assyrian Alkosh the home or at least the temporary dwelling place of the prophet Nahum.

[44] The author's knowledge of No Amon is no less precise, but few would insist that Nahum ever saw the Egyptian city.

[45] See especially 1. 11, 15.

the similarity in name and the fact that he prophesied against Nineveh.[46]

2. A second tradition, of greater antiquity, locates Elkosh in Galilee. Says Jerome: *"Elkesi* (or *Helkesei*) is still at this day a hamlet in Galilee, small indeed, and scarcely showing traces by ruins of ancient buildings, but for all that known to the Jews and pointed out to me by a guide."[47] The place named by Jerome has been identified, though not conclusively, with the modern *El Kauze,* near Ramieh. Jerome's statement was repeated by other ancient writers, and a few moderns accept the identification, supporting their contention by a few linguistic peculiarities—more or less doubtful—which are thought to favor a northern origin. If Jerome's view of the home of Nahum is correct, we would have to think of the prophet as the descendant of an Israelite family left behind in 722/721 B. C., who, perhaps, moved from his northern home to the territory of Judah. Though the correctness of this identification can be neither proved nor disproved, on the assumption of a Galilæan origin the silence of Nahum concerning the northern kingdom and the lack of interest in its restoration must appear strange. Consequently, most modern writers are persuaded that the contents of the book point in a different direction.

3. Knobel and Hitzig identified Elkosh with the city of Capernaum, the name of which means "village of

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[46] In a similar manner a late age found a resting place for the prophet Jonah in the city of Nineveh, because he was thought to have preached there. At any rate, a section of the ruins of the ancient city bears even to-day the name *Nebi Yunus*, that is, "Prophet Jonah."

[47] Preface to his commentary on *Nahum.* It is not known whether Jerome simply repeated a popular tradition, though his statement may imply this, or suggested the identification himself because of the similarity in the two names.

Nahum."[48] The original name of the city, it is thought, was Elkosh, which was changed to Capernaum in honor of its renowned citizen. The identification finds its only support in the present name of the city, which cannot be considered conclusive; there is no indication anywhere of a change from a former name, such as is assumed by the defenders of this view.

4. A fourth tradition places Elkosh in the south, in the territory of Simeon. "Nahum was from Elkosh, beyond *Bēt Gabrē,* of the tribe of Simeon."[49] *Bēt Gabrē* is undoubtedly the modern *Beit Jibrin,* the ancient Eleutheropolis, northeast of Lachish. A place in Judah is undoubtedly more in harmony with the exclusive interest in the southern kingdom manifested by the prophet; hence, the present writer, with most moderns, is inclined to look for the home of Nahum in the south of Palestine.

Teaching of the Book. The original utterances of Nahum contain little or no direct religious teaching. The opening verses of the alphabetic acrostic emphasize the twofold manifestation of the divine holiness—the divine vengeance and the divine mercy.[50] The one results in the destruction of the wicked,[51] the other in the salvation of the oppressed.[52] Faith in Yahweh will guarantee the divine favor and protection.[53] In a broad and general sense, 1. 15 is of Messianic import. The downfall of

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[48] In Hebrew כְּפַר־נַחוּם, *Kephar-Naḥūm.*

[49] The tradition first appears in a collection of traditions entitled *Lives of the Prophets,* ascribed, though erroneously, to Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis on the Island of Cyprus during the latter part of the fourth century A. D.

[50] 1. 2, 3.

[51] 1. 2.

[52] 1. 15; 2. 2.

[53] 1. 7.

Nineveh and Assyria prepares the way for the redemption and permanent exaltation of Zion, when "the wicked one shall no more pass through thee."

In one respect Nahum, the author of the genuine oracles, differs widely from his predecessors, namely, in his silence concerning the sin and guilt of Judah. The other prophets point to the present or impending distress and affliction of the people as the result of sin, and they insist that salvation can be theirs only if they repent and turn to Yahweh. "For this Nahum had no thought. His heart, for all its bigness, holds room only for the bitter memories, the baffled hopes, the unappeased hatreds of a hundred years." And yet it is doing less than full justice to Nahum to regard him exclusively as a "representative of the old, narrow and shallow prophetism," or to speak of his point of view as "essentially one with that of such men as Hananiah . . . and the so-called false prophets in general."[54] His silence concerning the sin of his own people is not entirely due to a lack of ethical ideals but, in part at least, to a narrowness of purpose. It was the prophet's sole aim to point out the hand of Yahweh in the impending doom of Nineveh; which he could do without dwelling upon the shortcomings of his own people. The fierceness of Nahum and his glee at the thought of Nineveh's ruin may fall short of the highest Old Testament ideal, but do they any more so than the utterances which came from some Christian pulpits during the recent World War? Moreover, one might think of Nahum as justifying his utterances as did the authors of similar expressions in more recent times, by insisting that his denunciations were prompted, not by personal hatred but by righteous indignation over the

[54] J. M. P. Smith, *Nahum*, p. 281.

outrages committed by a ruthless foe. Even if we omit the alphabetic acrostic from consideration, the prophet thinks of the sin and punishment of Nineveh not exclusively in their bearing upon the fortunes of Judah, but in their relation to Yahweh's government of the then known world. In a sense, therefore, Nahum gives utterance to the outraged conscience of humanity. Thus, while Nahum's message, in its direct teaching, is undoubtedly less spiritual and ethical than that of his predecessors, by implication it emphasizes Yahweh's sway over many nations and the obligations of these nations to own his sway. This emphasis gives to the message of Nahum a unique significance for the present age, in which the proper basis of international relations receives so much attention. The words of Kennedy,[55] written long before the World War, have an even deeper significance during the present period of readjustment: "Assyria in his hands becomes an object lesson to the empires of the modern world, teaching, as an eternal principle of the divine government of the world, the absolute necessity, for a nation's continued vitality, of that righteousness, personal, civic, and national, which alone exalteth a nation."[56]

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[55] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Nahum."

[56] Opinions concerning the religious insight and moral significance of Nahum may differ, but from the standpoint of literary power and skill all modern students assign to the prophet an exalted place among the prophet-poets of ancient Israel, for all are impressed by the force and picturesqueness of his language and style. "Each prophet," says Kirkpatrick, "has his special gift for his particular work. Nahum bears the palm for poetic power. His short book is a Pindaric ode of triumph over the oppressor's fall" (*Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 243). So also G. A. Smith: "His language is strong and brilliant; his rhythm rumbles and rolls, leaps and flashes, like the horsemen and chariots he describes" (*Minor Prophets*, II, p. 91). J. M. P. Smith, who, as has

8. The Book of Habakkuk

Name. The name חֲבַקּוּק *Ḥabaḳḳūḳ*[1] is commonly derived from a root which would give it the meaning "embrace" or "ardent embrace."[2] It may, however, be connected with the Assyrian *ḥambaḳūḳu,* the name of a garden plant.[3]

Contents and Outline.[4] The book of Habakkuk differs fundamentally from the other prophetic books: while the utterances contained in the other books claim to be the words of Yahweh addressed to the people, in this book the prophet, representing the people, addresses and challenges Yahweh. The prophecy opens with a complaint about the seeming indifference of Yahweh in the presence of widespread and persistent corruption in Judah. The prophet is perplexed, for he cannot reconcile this indifference with his conception of the character of Yahweh.[5] In reply Yahweh announces that he is about to execute judgment through the advancing Chaldeans.[6]

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been indicated, credits the prophet with but limited spiritual and ethical insight, ranks him very high in descriptive power and "capacity to bring a situation vividly before the mind's eye." "Through the whole scene," says he, "there moves a mighty passion and a great joy which lift the narrative out of the commonplace into the majestic and make of it great literature." (*Nahum,* p. 274).

[1] Septuagint Ἀμβακούμ, *'Ambakûm,* Theodotion, Ἀμβακούκ,*'Ambakûk,* which presupposes the Hebrew form חַבָּקּוּק *Ḥabbāḳūḳ*; Vulgate, *Habacuc.*

[2] Some of the ancient rabbis, connecting the name with 2 Kings 4. 16, thought that the prophet was the son of the Shunammite woman.

[3] If this etymology is correct, the Greek has preserved the more original form.

[4] The statement of contents here given is based upon the interpretation of the book justified below, pp. 510–514.

[5] 1. 2-4.

[6] 1. 5-11.

This only increases the prophet's perplexity, for he cannot understand how a righteous and holy God can use the lawless Chaldeans to execute judgment upon a people more righteous than they.[7] Yahweh solves this problem by announcing that the exaltation of the Chaldeans will be but temporary; in the end they will meet their doom, while the righteous will live.[8] Since the doom of the cruel oppressor is irrevocably determined, the wronged nations may even now begin to rejoice over his downfall; hence the prophet introduces them as taking up a "taunt-song" against the doomed Chaldeans, in the form of five woes upon the evil traits in the enemy's character and his bloody deeds of cruelty.[9] The prophecy closes with a lyrical passage, called in the title "prayer." In it the author magnifies the redeeming acts of Yahweh in the past and, in the certainty of his immediate appearance for the purpose of renewing his gracious manifestations, expresses unwavering confidence in his God.[10]

Title: Name of the author (1. 1).

I. The Prophet's Twofold Perplexity and the Divine Solutions (1. 2 to 2. 4).

1. First perplexity: How can Yahweh justify his indifference in the presence of wickedness and violence? (1. 2-4).
2. Yahweh's reply: He is not indifferent; the well-merited judgment is about to be executed by the Chaldeans (1. 5-11).
3. Second perplexity: How can a holy God employ an impure and godless agent? (1. 12-17).
4. Yahweh's final reply: The Chaldeans, though temporarily exalted, will meet certain doom; the righteous Jews, though temporarily afflicted, will live forever (2. 1-4).

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[7] 1. 12-17.
[8] 2. 1-4.
[9] 2. 5-20.
[10] 3. 1-19.

II. Taunt Song Over the Downfall of the Chaldeans (2. 5-20).

1. Woe upon lust of conquest and plunder (2. 5-8).
2. Woe upon rapacity (2. 9-11).
3. Woe upon the building of cities with the blood and property of strangers (2. 12-14).
4. Woe upon cruelty against conquered kings and nations (2. 15-17).
5. Woe upon idolatry (2. 18-20).

III. A Prayer: Petition, Gratitude, Confidence (3. 1-19).

1. Title: Author and melody (3. 1).
2. Petition: "Revive thy work" (3. 2).
3. The mighty works of Yahweh in the past (3. 3-15).
   (1) Yahweh's terrible approach (3. 3-7).
   (2) Question: Why did Yahweh appear? (3. 8-12).
   (3) Answer: For the salvation of his people (3. 13-15).
4. The poet's confidence in Yahweh, the God of his salvation (3. 16-19).

Interpretation of Chapters 1, 2. Questions of the integrity and date of chapters 1 and 2 are so closely bound up with the interpretation of these two chapters that the latter may be given first consideration. The interpretations advocated may be grouped under three heads: 1. The prophet teaches that the sin of Judah is to be punished by the Chaldeans, who in turn will suffer severe punishment. 2. Nothing is said of the sin of Judah; the prophet dwells upon the wrongs done to Judah and other nations by the Chaldeans, and announces the impending doom of the oppressor. 3. Nothing is said of the sin of Judah; the present oppressors are not the Chaldeans, but the Assyrians[11] or the Egyptians,[12] whose overthrow is to be accomplished by the Chaldeans.

In order to make the several interpretations clearer a

[11] Budde, Betteridge.
[12] G. A. Smith.

brief outline of the two chapters according to each view may be given.

I. The first interpretation is based upon the text as it stands:

1. 2-4. The corruption of Judah: The oppression of the righteous Jews by the wicked Jews calls for divine judgment upon the oppressors.

1. 5-11. Yahweh announces that he is about to send the Chaldeans to execute the long delayed judgment.

1. 12-17. The prophet is perplexed: He cannot understand how a righteous God can use these barbarians to execute judgment upon a people more righteous than they.

2. 1-4. Yahweh solves the perplexing problem by announcing that the exaltation of the Chaldeans will be but temporary; in the end they will meet their doom, while the righteous Jews will live forever.

2. 5-20. Woes upon the Chaldeans.

II. The second interpretation finds it necessary to alter the present arrangement of the verses. Since 1. 5-11 do not fit into the interpretation these verses are regarded as an originally independent oracle, which may at one time have occupied a place before 1. 2.[13] Omitting the troublesome verses, the following outline of the two chapters may be given:

1. 2-4. Oppression of the righteous Judah by the wicked Chaldeans.

1. 12-17. Appeal to Yahweh in behalf of Judah against the oppressors.

2. 1-4. Yahweh promises deliverance.

2. 5-20. Woes upon the Chaldeans.

[13] Giesebrecht, *Beitraege zur Jesajakritik*, pp. 196-198; similarly Wellhausen and Nowack.

III. The third interpretation also finds it necessary to alter the present order of the verses; the announcement in 1. 5-11 is given a more suitable place after 2. 4. With this change the outline is as follows:

1. 2-4. Oppression of the righteous Jews by the wicked Assyrians or Egyptians.

1. 12-17. Appeal to Yahweh in behalf of the oppressed against the oppressors.

2. 1-4. Yahweh promises deliverance.

1. 5-11. The Chaldeans will be the instruments to execute judgment upon the oppressors and to bring deliverance to the Jews.

2. 5-20. Woes upon the Assyrians or the Egyptians.[14]

Which of the three views offers the most probable interpretation of the two chapters?

Against the third view several objections may be urged: (1) It would not be easy to account for the transposition of 1. 5-11 from its original position after 2. 4.[15] (2) The absence of all mention of the Assyrians or Egyptians is peculiar. There may have been, as Betteridge suggests, no need of naming them, but when other considerations make it doubtful that these nations are meant the silence cannot be overlooked. (3) From 1. 5-11, no matter where the verses are placed, it appears that the Chaldeans and their methods of warfare were well known to the prophet; but if the words were spoken when the Assyrians, or the Egyptians, were the masters

[14] Other interpretations, based upon more radical treatment of the contents are set forth below, pp. 518, 519.

[15] Budde traces the transposition to a working over of the two chapters during the period of the exile, when the Jews had come to take a less favorable view of the Chaldeans. A. B. Davidson says of Budde's explanation: "If it is true, criticism is not without its romance" (*Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, p. 51).

of Judah they originated at a time when the Chaldeans were just appearing upon the scene. Their irresistible power was first revealed by the overthrow of the Assyrians and the Egyptians. (4) According to this interpretation 1. 5-11 refers to the Chaldeans, 1. 12-17 to the Assyrians or the Egyptians, but a close comparison of the two passages inevitably leads to the impression that they refer to one and the same nation.[16]

The same objections cannot be urged against the second interpretation. Indeed, the arbitrary treatment of 1. 5-11 constitutes the only serious criticism. Is the fact that a passage runs counter to an otherwise doubtful theory sufficient reason for omitting it? If it is interpreted as an earlier independent prophecy, its present position must still be accounted for. Moreover, the transposition of the verses to the beginning of the chapter does not remove the difficulty, for they are less suitable there than verses 2-4, which permit a natural and consistent development of the thought.

The first interpretation has by no means escaped criticism: (1) In one passage the term "wicked" applies to a portion of the Jews, in another, to the Chaldeans.[17] (2) In 1. 5, 6 the raising up of the Chaldeans appears to be still in the future, while 1. 13-16 and 2. 5-20 describe their treatment of the conquered nations in a manner which indicates that the Chaldeans and their methods of warfare were well known. (3) It seems unnatural that "in a prophecy, the main theme of which is to set forth the injustice which Israel suffers, and to announce judgment upon its authors," injustice prevalent

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[16] Compare especially 1. 11 with 1. 16.

[17] Compare 1. 4 with 1. 13.

in Judah should receive the emphasis given to it in 1. 2-4.

Concerning these objections the following remarks may be made: (1) There is no plausible reason why general terms like "righteous" and "wicked" may not refer, in one and the same discourse, to more than one person or group of persons. (2) The second objection rests upon a misunderstanding. The reference in 1. 6 is not to the first appearance of the Chaldeans in history, but to their first and imminent advance against Judah. Earlier campaigns had furnished ample opportunity for becoming acquainted with them and the manner of their warfare. (3) Has the objector properly defined the "main theme" of the two chapters? Surely, the text as it now stands permits a perfectly logical development of the author's thought; indeed, the development of the thought becomes more vivid and forceful, for instead of one problem to trouble the prophet we have two, and instead of one divine reply we have two. Is there anything impossible or improbable in this? The present writer believes that on the whole the first interpretation, which requires no omissions or transpositions, is the most satisfactory.

Integrity of the Book. The determination of the proper interpretation of chapters 1 and 2 does not solve all critical questions. There is still the possibility that in the two chapters elements coming from different times and authors are combined in such a manner that a perfectly logical development in the thought is the result. Consequently, the further question may be asked: Is it possible to accept the whole book, or even the whole of chapters 1 and 2, as the work of Habakkuk? Now, even a superficial study of modern discussions soon

reveals (1) that practically every verse has been denied to the alleged author by one or more scholars, and (2) that there exists the widest divergence of opinion among recent writers. In other words, the critical problems involved are so complex that a work of this kind cannot possibly undertake a detailed discussion; it must be content with a more or less general consideration of the passages regarding which doubts have been expressed most persistently.[18]

Even with this limitation, it is found that considerably more than half of the book, including—in addition to other less extensive secondary elements in chapters 1 and 2—1. 5-11; 2. 9-20; chapter 3 entire, is denied to Habakkuk. The principal reason for rejecting 1. 5-11 has already been discussed, and it has been seen that a proper interpretation of the book makes the rejection unnecessary.[19] The "woes" in 2. 9-20 are denied to Habakkuk chiefly on three grounds: (1) The historical background is that of the exile; they originated at a time when the Chaldean empire was nearing its end. (2) In part at least they are unsuitable if supposed to be ad-

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[18] The problems are discussed in the *Introductions* by Driver, Cornill, Steuernagel, etc.; and in the commentaries on the Minor Prophets by Wellhausen, Nowack, Marti, G. A. Smith, and others; also in A. B. Davidson, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.* Of special studies the following are the most suggestive: K. Budde, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1893, pp. 383-393; *Expositor*, 1895, pp. 372-385; *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Habakkuk"; J. W. Rothstein, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1894, pp. 51-85; M. Lauterburg, *Theologische Zeitschrift aus der Schweiz*, 1896, pp. 74-102; J. Boehmer, *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1899, pp. 724-735; O. Happel, *Das Buch des Propheten Habackuk*; F. E. Peiser, *Der Prophet Habakuk*; W. R. Betteridge, *American Journal of Theology*, 1903, pp. 647ff.

[19] Marti regards 1. 5-10, 14, 15 as the oldest and only preexilic part of the book.

dressed to the Chaldean king. (3) Some parts, especially verses 12-14, "consist largely of citations and reminiscences of other passages, including some late ones."[20] On these grounds Stade, Kuenen, and many more recent writers consider 9-20 an expansion, made in postexilic times, of one original "woe," now found in verses 6-8.[21] It is difficult to see how the reasons stated can be accepted as in any sense conclusive: (1) There is nothing in the historical allusions that points clearly to an exilic date; they may all be explained as springing from the period following the destruction of Nineveh in 607/606 and the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish in 604 B. C. (2) While it may be admitted that some of the woes are not applicable to the Chaldean king as an individual, the difficulties disappear as soon as we remember that he is the representative of the nation and that the woes are intended for the whole people. (3) The argument from literary parallels is always precarious. In this case the resemblances are few in number and not of a character that necessarily implies literary dependence.[22] In other words, there seems insufficient ground for rejecting the "woes" in 2. 5-20 or 2. 9-20.[23]

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[20] Compare verse 12 with Mic. 3. 10; verse 13 with Jer. 51. 58; verse 14 with Isa. 11. 9; verse 16b with Jer. 25. 15, 16; verses 18-20 with Isa. 44. 9ff.; 46. 6, 7; Jer. 10. 1-16.

[21] Others, like Marti, reject the whole of 2. 5-20, while Budde, Nowack, Rothstein, and others, reject only small parts of the "woes" as later additions.

[22] Some of the passages showing resemblances are earlier than Habakkuk, so that he might have been the borrower; but in no case is literary dependence beyond question.

[23] This does not mean that the "woes" contain no secondary elements; for instance, verse 20 certainly is late, and in other places copyists or redactors have left their marks.

The "prayer" in chapter 3 presents a more troublesome problem, and modern scholarship, following Stade,[24] is practically unanimous in regarding it as secondary, for the following reasons: (1) It belongs to the psalm literature;[25] (2) it was taken from a collection of psalms used in public worship;[26] (3) the historical situation reflected is different from that presupposed in chapters 1 and 2;[27] (4) the religious tone is eschatological and apocalyptic;[28] (5) the style differs from that in the preceding chapters.[29] Of course these arguments are not altogether conclusive. Why may not a prophet compose a psalm? Why may not such a psalm find a place in a collection intended for Temple use?[30] It is undoubtedly true that "to the circumstances of Habakkuk's age, so clearly reflected in chapters 1, 2, there are here no allusions";[31] on the other hand, the psalm, with the possible exception of verses 16ff., contains no allusions to cir-

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[24] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1884, pp. 154-159.

[25] Compare the use of the word *selah*, the expressions "for the chief musician" and "on my stringed instruments," and "prayer" as the title of the poem.

[26] The directions in verse 1 and in the subscription point in that direction, as also the use of the word *selah*.

[27] Verses 16ff. seem to allude to a calamity other than the invasion of the Chaldeans.

[28] Support for this claim has been seen in the use of the term "anointed" or "Messiah" of Israel, in verse 13; other expressions are less clear, though there seems to be an apocalyptic coloring.

[29] These differences even the English reader can see and appreciate.

[30] The abstract possibility of Habakkuk being a psalm writer can be denied only on the assumption—which cannot be substantiated—that all psalm literature is of postexilic origin. See F. C. Eiselen, *Psalms and Other Sacred Writings*, pp. 58-60.

[31] This silence may or may not be significant; but it must be remembered that the argument from silence is always precarious.

cumstances inconsistent with those in Habakkuk's days.[32] A comparison with Exod. 15, Deut. 33, and Judges 5, shows that, so far as substance, form, general contents, and religious ideas are concerned, a preexilic date is not excluded. Nor does difference in style necessarily militate against unity of authorship, for the poetic style of an author may be expected to differ from that employed in writing prose. All this simply means that it is impossible to prove or to disprove that Habakkuk is the author of the prayer. At the same time the present writer must admit that the longer he studies the prayer, the stronger becomes the conviction that he is reading the production of an author other than Habakkuk, who wrote during the postexilic period.[33] In other words, he believes that, while there is insufficient reason for denying chapters 1 and 2,[34] apart from minor expansions and additions, to the preexilic prophet, chapter 3 finds a more suitable origin in the postexilic period.[35]

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[32] The presence of two or more different kinds of distress at one and the same time cannot be denied.

[33] Verse 16 may mark the end of the original "prayer"; verses 17-19 may be a later expansion.

[34] Steuernagel considers 1. 12 to 2. 4 a prophecy independent of 1. 2-11, but built up after the pattern of the latter. He assigns it (as also the woes in 2. 5ff.) to the middle period of the exile and interprets it as directed against the Chaldeans. He further believes that this exilic author bore the Babylonian or Assyrian name *Ḥambaḳūḳu* (see above, p. 508) while the author of 1. 2-11 is unknown. The present writer believes it unnecessary to separate the two sections.

[35] The discussion in the text would have become too complicated if detailed consideration had been given to all the different theories regarding the origin of the book. However, it may be worth while to outline briefly a few theories that differ most widely from the conclusions of the present writer, and to which little or no reference has been made in the text: (1) Lauterburg defends the unity of the book and assigns the whole of it to the years immediately preceding the preaching of Deutero-Isaiah, that is, about 545 B. C. (2) Peiser, also defending the

Date of Habakkuk's Activity.[36] The question of date is closely bound up with that of interpretation.[37] Budde, on the theory that the oppressors threatened with destruction are the Assyrians, dates the genuine prophecies of Habakkuk between 621 and 615 B. C.; but, as Betteridge has pointed out,[38] that date is open to serious objection: (1) After 626 B. C. the hold of Assyria on the Palestinian states relaxed; hence, the description in 1. 2-4, if it applies to the Assyrian, was unsuitable after that date. (2) The knowledge of the Chaldeans presupposed in 1. 5ff. was impossible as early as 621 or 615 B. C., since they did not enter upon the conquests revealing the character of their warfare until some years later. Betteridge, also assuming that the Assyrians are the oppressors, suggests a date about 701 B. C., in connection

unity of the book, interprets it as the work of a prince of Judah, who lived as a hostage at the court in Nineveh, had experienced the attack upon Nineveh in 625 B. C. (see above, p. 501) and saw its final doom approaching. The book, he thinks, was written about 609 B. C., on the receipt of the news of Josiah's death, the author expecting that the destruction of Nineveh would bring deliverance to his own people, and, perhaps, raise him to the throne. (3) Duhm, also discovering a certain unity in the book, sees in it a collection of six poems from the time of Alexander the Great (1. 2-4; 5-11; 12-17; 2. 1-3; 4-20; 3. 2-16 (+17-19). (4) Happel believes that the book in its present form is the work of a Maccabean writer who made use of earlier prophetic elements, namely, 1. 6-11; 2. 5-8; 3. 3-15. (5) Marti distinguishes three stages in the growth of the book: (*a*) About 605 Habakkuk announced the coming of the Chaldeans as instruments in the hands of Yahweh to execute judgment upon the rebellious in Judah (1. 5-10, 14-16; the original reference of 1. 1 is to this utterance); (*b*) toward the close of the exile were added the woes in 2. 5-19 and 1. 11, 12b; (*c*) in the second century were added 1. 2-4, 12a, 13; 2. 1-4, and 1. 17 as a connecting link between 1. 14-16 and 2. 1-4; also the prayer in chapter 3.

[36] This discussion concerns itself only with the date of the genuine utterances.

[37] See above, pp. 510–514.

[38] *American Journal of Theology*, 1903, pp. 647ff.

with the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib.[39] If Habakkuk prophesied against the Assyrians, the latter is the more suitable date, but, as has been brought out in the discussion of the interpretation of the book, there is every reason for believing that the Assyrians were not in the thought of the prophet.

If the prophecy is directed against Egypt, the years between 608 and 604 offer the only suitable occasion. In the former year Necoh, Pharaoh of Egypt, conquered and slew Josiah, and asserted his sovereignty by deposing Jehoahaz, whom the people had chosen as Josiah's successor, and placing Jehoiakim on the throne. In 604 the Egyptians suffered a decisive defeat at the hands of the Chaldeans, which brought the Egyptian rule in Judah to an end. The only opportunity of oppressing Judah that Egypt had was during the period between the two dates indicated, consequently the denunciation in 1. 2-4 could come only from those years. But can the oppressors be identified with the Egyptians?

Those who identify the oppressors condemned in 1. 2-4 with the Chaldeans are compelled to assign the prophecy to a date later than the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish in 604 B. C., for it was only after this test of strength that the Chaldeans entered upon a policy of world conquest. Moreover, the descriptions in 1. 2-4, 12-16; 2. 8-19 presuppose the lapse of considerable time, during which the Chaldeans oppressed Judah and subdued other nations. Consequently, on this theory,

[39] 2 Kings 18, 19. The announcement that the Chaldeans will execute the judgment he connects with Chaldean uprisings, rumors of which, he thinks, caused Sennacherib to raise the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings 19. 6, 7; Isa. 37. 6, 7). He believes that the prophet acquired his familiarity with the Chaldean methods of warfare during earlier uprisings under Merodach-baladan.

Nowack is undoubtedly right in bringing the prophecy down to the years following the first exile in 597 B. C., or, as he says, in round numbers about 590 B. C. But does 1. 2-4 refer to oppression by the Chaldeans?

A different date must be sought if the interpretation accepted by the present writer and set forth in another connection is correct.[40] The reference to the Chaldeans in 1. 5-11 suggests: (1) that at the time the threat was uttered the Chaldeans had not yet come into direct contact with Judah, and (2) that they had already given exhibitions of the cruel character of their warfare. Now the years following the overthrow of Nineveh in 607/606 and the defeat of the Egyptian armies at Carchemish in 604 offered abundant opportunity for becoming acquainted with the merciless cruelties of Chaldean warfare. It would seem best, therefore, to assign the activity of Habakkuk to a date shortly before 600 B. C.

The Prophet and the Significance of his Message. While the book itself throws little light on the person and life of the prophet, and the rest of the Old Testament is silent concerning him, numerous legends have grown up around the name. The identification of the prophet with the son of the Shunammite woman, already mentioned, is one. Another, connecting Isa. 21. 6 with Hab. 2. 1 makes Habakkuk the watchman set by Isaiah to watch for the fall of Babylon. One of the recensions of the Septuagint text of the apocryphal *Bel and the Dragon* declares that the story was taken "from the prophecy of Habakkuk the son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi."[41] We do not know what authority there may be

[40] See above, pp. 513, 514.

[41] The reference may be to an otherwise unknown apocryphal book ascribed to Habakkuk.

for calling his father Jesus. The claim that he was of the tribe of Levi may be an inference from the musical note at the end of the third chapter. According to the *Lives of the Prophets,*[42] he belonged to *Beth-zoḥer,* or, *Beth-zaḥer,* of the tribe of Simeon. An interesting story is found in *Bel and the Dragon:*[43] "Now there was in Jewry the prophet Hambakoum,[44] who had made pottage, and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going into the field, for to bring it to the reapers. But the angel of the Lord said unto Hambakoum, Go, carry the dinner that thou hast into Babylon, unto Daniel, who is in the lions' den. And Hambakoum said, Lord, I never saw Babylon; neither do I know where the den is. Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown, and lifted him up by the hair of his head, and with the blast of his breath set him in Babylon over the den. And Hambakoum cried, saying, O Daniel, Daniel, take the dinner which God hath sent thee. And Daniel said, Thou hast remembered me, O God; neither hast thou forsaken them that love thee. So Daniel arose, and did eat; and the angel of God set Hambakoum in his own place immediately." According to the *Lives,* Habakkuk died two years before the return of the exiles from Babylon. All these legends, however, have little or no historical value.

If Habakkuk prophesied about 600 B. C., he was a contemporary of Jeremiah; hence the political, social, moral, and religious conditions facing him formed also the background of Jeremiah's activity and teaching. The only passage throwing light on the internal affairs of

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[42] See above, p. 505.

[43] 33-39.

[44] For this form of the name, see above, p. 508.

Judah is 1. 2-4,[45] while political conditions in western Asia, as they affected Judah, are described in 1. 5-17.[46]

Habakkuk, like the other prophets, was a keen observer of his environment, but the things he saw, instead of furnishing him a message to his contemporaries,[47] inspired him to challenge the righteousness and holiness of Yahweh.[48] He, like many other pious souls, was troubled and perplexed by the apparent inequalities and inconsistencies of life which he found difficult to reconcile with his lofty conception of Yahweh. Nevertheless, he did not sulk; boldly he presented his perplexity to his God, who pointed the way to a solution, so that the prophet came forth from the struggle with a stronger and more intense faith in Yahweh and the ultimate destiny of his people.

It is in connection with his attempts to solve the perplexing problems raised by the unpunished sins of his countrymen and the unlimited successes of the godless Chaldeans that the prophet gives expression to two sublime truths: (1) The universality of the moral government of Yahweh. Though Habakkuk believes in a

[45] Compare with these verses Jer. 25. 3-9; also chapters 27 and 35.

[46] For a more detailed description, see vol. I, pp. 298–302.

[47] The differences between Habakkuk and his contemporary Jeremiah are very striking: Jeremiah is forever denouncing the sins of the people; of the Chaldeans he speaks almost exclusively as the instruments of Yahweh, without condemning them or saying much about their cruelties. Habakkuk, on the other hand, devotes only three verses (1. 2-4) to the sins of Judah, and, though recognizing the Chaldeans as Yahweh's instruments, he persistently condemns them for their wrongdoing, and the climax of the prophecy is the confident assertion of their ultimate annihilation. In this emphasis on the cruelties and doom of the oppressor Habakkuk resembles Nahum.

[48] Habakkuk resembles the Old Testament sages more than he does the prophets; he is a forerunner of the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes; compare also Malachi, below, pp. 604, 605.

special divine providence over Israel, he insists with equal emphasis that the destinies of all nations are in Yahweh's hands. Temporarily, the Chaldeans may worship other gods, they may "sacrifice unto their nets" and burn incense "unto their drag," because by them "their portion is fat and their food plenteous"; but Yahweh is from everlasting, the Holy One, who will attest his supremacy by utterly destroying the boastful conqueror with his idols. (2) "The righteous shall live by his faithfulness."[49] By faithfulness the prophet means integrity, fidelity, steadfastness in righteousness under all provocations. In other words, for the righteous his integrity and fidelity constitute elements of permanency, they cannot perish, they will endure forever. Even the genuine oracles of Habakkuk justify the description of the prophet as "the prophet of faith"; but the most striking expression of a living faith and confidence in Yahweh is found in 3. 17-19—probably a later addition—which is unsurpassed anywhere in the Old Testament.[50]

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[49] 2. 4. The thought expressed by the prophet is not quite the same as that expressed by the New Testament writer who quotes the words (Gal. 3. 11). "Faith" with Paul suggests a mystical union with God through Jesus Christ as an active motive of right conduct. Habakkuk places the emphasis on what Paul would regard the sequel of faith; but the former would undoubtedly agree with the other prophets in finding the source of the qualities he stresses in a vital knowledge of Yahweh.

[50] Only the student of the Hebrew text can get an adequate idea of the literary excellence of the book. "The literary power of Habakkuk is considerable. Though his book is a brief one, it is full of force; his descriptions are graphic and powerful; thought and expression are alike poetic; he is still a master of the old classical style, terse, parallelistic, pregnant; there is no trace of the often prosaic diffusiveness which manifests itself in the writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And if chapter 3 be his, he is, moreover, a lyric poet of high order; the grand imagery and the rhythmic flow of his ode will bear comparison with some of the finest productions of the Hebrew muse."

9. The Book of Zephaniah

Name. The name Zephaniah[1] means "Yahweh hides," or "Yahweh has hidden." Concerning it G. A. Smith says: "It suggests the prophet's birth in the 'killing time' of Manasseh," when many faithful servants of Yahweh had to lay down their lives for the faith.[2]

Contents and Outline. The book of Zephaniah falls naturally into two parts of unequal length, the first part[3] containing almost exclusively denunciations and threats, the second,[4] promises of salvation and glorification. The book opens with an announcement of judgment, near at hand, that will involve the whole world:[5] Judah,[6] Philistia,[7] Moab and Ammon,[8] Ethiopia[9] and Assyria.[10] A special woe is pronounced upon the rebellious and polluted city of Jerusalem, which has withstood all efforts to save her and, therefore, is doomed.[11] Since all warnings have failed, the world judgment is inevitable;[12] from it a remnant will be saved.[13] The book closes with a picture of the joy of the redeemed daughter of Zion.[14]

Title: Author of the prophecy (1. 1).

I. Threats of a Universal Judgment (1. 2 to 3. 7).

1. The day of Yahweh a day of terror to all—only one way of escape (1. 2 to 2. 3).

(1) The world judgment (1. 2, 3).

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[1] Hebrew, צְפַנְיָה, *Sephanyāh*; Septuagint Σοφονίας, *Sophonías*, Vulgate, *Sophonias*.

[2] Compare 2 Kings 21. 16.

[3] 1. 2 to 3. 7.

[4] 3. 8-20.

[5] 1. 2, 3.

[6] 1. 4 to 2. 3.

[7] 2. 4-7.

[8] 2. 8-11.

[9] 2. 12.

[10] 2. 13-15.

[11] 3. 1-7.

[12] 3. 8.

[13] 3. 9-13.

[14] 3. 14-20.

(2) Judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem (1. 4-18).
a. Causes of the judgment (1. 4-9).
(a) Religious apostasy (1. 4-6).
(b) Social and moral corruption (1. 7-9).
b. Wail of the inhabitants (1. 10-13).
c. Imminence and terror of the judgment (1. 14-18).
(3) Exhortation to repentance (2. 1-3).
2. Judgment upon the nations (2. 4-15).
(1) Philistia (2. 4-7).
(2) Moab and Ammon (2. 8-11).
(3) Ethiopia (2. 12).
(4) Assyria (2. 13-15).
3. Woe upon the polluted city of Jerusalem (3. 1-7).
(1) The city's religious and moral apostasy (3. 1-4).
(2) Yahweh's futile attempts to win her affection (3. 5-7).

II. Transforming Effects of the Judgment and the Subsequent Glory (3. 8-20).

1. The world judgment and its effects (1. 8-13).
(1) Inevitableness of the judgment (1. 8).
(2) Effect upon the nations (3. 9, 10).
(3) Effect upon Judah (3. 11-13).
2. Joy of the redeemed daughter of Zion (3. 14-20).
(1) Exhortation to rejoice and be glad (3. 14-17).
(2) Yahweh's glorious promise (3. 18-20).

Integrity of the Book. The originality of every verse in chapters 2 and 3 and of several verses in chapter 1 has been questioned by one or more scholars.[15] Stade, who was the first, in more recent times, to attack the integrity of extended portions of the book, questioned 2. 1-3, 11 and the whole of chapter 3.[16] Schwally expressed doubt concerning 2. 1-4 and positively denied to Zephaniah 2. 5-12 and chapter 3.[17] Wellhausen suspected 2. 2, 3 and

[15] The first question seems to have been raised by Eichhorn, in 1824, who rejected 2. 13-15 as alien to the prophet's thought; Vort, in 1865, rejected 2. 7-11 and 3. 14-20.

[16] *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I, p. 644.

[17] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1890, pp. 165-240.

rejected 2. 7 (in part), 8-11, and chapter 3.[18] Budde rejected as secondary 2. 4-15; 3. 9, 10, 14-20.[19] Coming down to still more recent writers we find that Nowack questions, in addition to a few sentences in chapter 1, 2. 7 (in part), 8-11, 15; 3. 9, 10, 14-20;[20] G. A. Smith rejects 2. 8-11; 3. 9, 10, 14-20;[21] A. B. Davidson believes that 2. 4-15 may in various places have been expanded, but that in substance these verses come from Zephaniah; he expresses doubt concerning 3. 9, 14-20;[22] Driver is inclined to reject 2. 11; 3. 9, 10; and expresses doubts concerning 3. 14-20, especially verses 18-20.[23] Marti assigns to Zephaniah the following verses, in the order here given: 1. 7, 2, 3 (in part), 4, 5, 8 (in part), 11 (in part), 12, 13 (in part), 14-16, 17 (in part); 2. 1, 2 (in part), 4, 5-7, 12-14. He thinks that 3. 1-7 was added during the postexilic period; other additions were made in the second century B. C. when the book passed through the hands of a redactor; 2. 11 and 3, 9, 10 he considers the latest additions.[24] J. M. P. Smith sums up his conclusion regarding the presence of secondary elements—in addition to minor glosses—in these words: "The oracle against Moab and Ammon, 2. 8, 9, is relegated to later times since its phraseology presupposes the conditions of the exile as actually existing. An expansion of this oracle is found in 2. 10, 11. The fall of Nineveh is taken for granted in 2. 15, which is therefore placed after that event. In the third chapter the only

[18] *Die Kleinen Propheten, Zephanja.*
[19] *Studien und Kritiken*, 1893, pp. 393-399.
[20] *Die Kleinen Propheten, Zephanja.*
[21] *The Minor Prophets, Zephaniah.*
[22] *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.*
[23] *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Zephaniah."
[24] *Das Dodekapropheton, Zephanja.*

original matter is found in verses 1-5. Verses 6, 7 may possibly be old material; but in that case they are out of place in their present context. Verses 8-13 are a post-exilic addition, in which is now included a gloss, 9, 10, revealing a different attitude toward the heathen and interrupting the continuity of thought between verses 8 and 11. Verses 14-20 are another addition from post-exilic times, which has likewise undergone some inner expansion."[25]

An examination of the views here outlined and of the conclusions of other scholars shows that the passages questioned or rejected with greatest persistency are 2. 1-3, 4-15, especially 8-11; 3. 9, 10 and 14-20; and these demand somewhat more detailed consideration.

The principal objection urged against 2. 1-3 is the presence in 2. 3 of the expressions "meek of the earth" and "seek meekness"; for it is claimed that "meek" and "meekness" as religious terms are postexilic. Of course, it cannot be proved that Zephaniah might not have used the words,[26] and yet the interpretation of verse 3 as a later gloss would leave a somewhat more consistent exhortation, especially if verses 1 and 2 are taken as the conclusion of the appeal in chapter 1.[27] With verse 3 removed the second objection, based on the difference in general tone, in so far as it has any weight,[28] also dis-

[25] *Zephaniah*, p. 173.

[26] The word "meek" occurs in Num. 12. 3 (compare Isa. 11. 4), and meekness, or a humble attitude toward Yahweh, is emphasized during the preexilic period as a divine requirement (Exod. 10. 3; Isa. 2. 9ff.; compare Mic. 6. 8).

[27] This is preferable to J. M. P. Smith's interpretation of the verses as the beginning of the threat against Nineveh.

[28] In part the argument springs from the contention that no promises of a bright future come from the period before the exile. For a more detailed discussion of this question, see above, vol. I, pp. 137–139.

appears.[29] In other words, there is insufficient reason for questioning verses 1 and 2.

The several oracles, which make up 2. 4-15, may be considered separately. The first threat, against Philistia, in 2. 4-7, is quite intelligible in the days of Zephaniah, for the Scythians, whom the prophet had in mind, might be expected to pass right through the land of the Philistines. Only verse 7 introduces an unexpected idea, and there may be good reason for regarding it as a postexilic expansion of verses 4-6.

The oracle against Moab and Ammon, in 2. 8-11, is rejected for the following reasons: (1) The two nations were far removed from the route taken by the Scythians. (2) The "reproaches" referred to in 2. 8, 10 presuppose the destruction of Jerusalem.[30] (3) The attitude of the prophet toward Judah, as reflected in verses 9 and 10, is the exact opposite of the sentiment expressed in chapter 1. (4) The *Ḳinah* verse, which predominates in the rest of the section, is absent from verses 8-11. (5) Verse 12 is the natural continuation of verse 7, or, if verse 7 is rejected, of verse 6. In reply it may be said: (1) While it is true that Moab and Ammon were not in the direct line of the Scythian advance against Egypt, a *world* judgment could hardly be executed without a deviation from a straight line of march in the direction of Egypt. Moreover, if the prophet thought of a world judgment, was it not perfectly natural that he should name, among the nations doomed, these two long time

[29] The principal difficulties are due to corruption of the text; but for a more detailed discussion of the textual problems recent commentaries should be consulted.

[30] Compare Ezek. 25. 3, 6, 8. "It surprises," says Wellhausen, "that the Moabites and Ammonites should have mocked and looked down upon the Jews as early as the days of Josiah."

enemies of his people? (2) It is by no means certain that the "reproaches" presuppose the calamity of 586 B. C.; they may refer to expressions of hostility such as are alluded to again and again in the Old Testament.[31] If the prophecy came from a period subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem, silence concerning Edom would be very peculiar.[32] (3) The argument based upon a difference in the prophetic attitude applies only to a portion of the passage; if the disturbing elements are removed, the oracle becomes perfectly consistent with the universally accepted genuine utterances of Zephaniah. (4) True, the present Hebrew text is not in the *Ḳinah* meter;[33] but (*a*) Have we a right to expect absolute metrical consistency in oratory? and (*b*) may not the apparent inconsistency be due to corruption of the text or to a later expansion of an authentic utterance? (5) An interruption of the thought can be charged only by those who assume that the prophet meant to enumerate the nations in the order in which the Scythians might be expected to reach their territory—from Philistia they might be expected to pass immediately to Ethiopia—Egypt. Is the underlying assumption warranted? But while the arguments against the whole of verses 8-11 are in no sense conclusive, suspicions against verses 10 and 11, and possibly 9b, are not without justification: (1) In view of the tone of chapter 1, the promise to Judah seems out of place in this connection. (2) Verse 12 forms a more

[31] Num. 22ff.; Judg. 3. 12ff.; 10. 7ff.; 1 Sam. 11. 1-5; 2 Sam. 8. 2; Amos 1. 13-15; 2. 1-3; Isa. 16. 5; 25. 10; Jer. 48. 29; Deut. 23. 3-8.

[32] "It is highly improbable," says Davidson, "that a threat of judgment on the nations, uttered during the exile, would fail to include Edom."

[33] For a description of the *Ḳinah* meter see F. C. Eiselen, *The Psalms and Other Sacred Writings*, pp. 22, 23.

natural continuation of verse 9, more especially, of 9a. (3) In verses 8, 9 Yahweh is the speaker, so also in verse 12; in verses 10, 11 he is spoken of in the third person. (4) The lofty ideal expressed in verse 11 is more in harmony with the thought of a later age. The present writer feels that the threat against Moab and Ammon should be retained, but that in its present form it is of later date, and that verses 10 and 11 and possibly 9b are later additions. The arguments against the oracles concerning Ethiopia and Assyria, in verses 12-15, are in no sense conclusive.

The condemnation of Jerusalem in 3. 1-7 so closely resembles, in spirit and substance, chapter 1 that objections to the originality of these verses cannot be accepted as conclusive;[34] but much uncertainty exists both regarding the meaning and the origin of the rest of chapter 3. In the undoubtedly genuine utterances of Zephaniah one and the same fate is announced for Judah and the other nations of the earth; in verse 8 a discrimination is made: the nations will be destroyed for the benefit of Judah. The introduction of this promise, following immediately upon the condemnation of Jerusalem in verses 1ff. seems rather abrupt; especially, since it is by no means certain that the words can be interpreted as addressed only to the righteous remnant within Judah. Perhaps verse 8 represents an original utterance of Zephaniah,[35] which subsequently was modified in the interests of Judah. Verses 9 and 10 are rejected by most modern commentators as foreign to the context and, thus, as inter-

[34] See J. M. P. Smith, *Zephaniah*, pp. 243, 244; there remains some question regarding the relation of verses 6, 7 to the preceding verses.

[35] If verse 8 is interpreted as addressed ironically to all the inhabitants of Judah, the promise element disappears, and with it the principal objection against its originality (Nowack, *Zephanja*, p. 292).

rupting the connection between verses 8 and 11. Even Davidson, usually very cautious and conservative, thinks that the omission of at least verse 10 would add force and dignity to the utterance.[36] Verses 11-13 contain an announcement of the conversion of a remnant, which is not necessarily foreign to Zephaniah's thought though, it must be admitted, most modern commentators relegate them, like all similar promises in preexilic prophecies, to the postexilic period. The closing verses, 14-20, are similar in tone to Mic. 7. 7-20.[37] The buoyant tone of the passage forms a marked contrast to the somber, quiet strain of verses 11-13; the judgments upon Judah appear to be in the past;[38] verses 18-20 seem to presuppose a scattering of the people of Judah, while the purifying judgment of verses 11-13 falls upon the people in their own land; hence there is much justice in Davidson's remark that "the historical situation presupposed is that of Isa. 40ff." On the whole, the verses are best interpreted as a "new song from God," added to the utterances of Zephaniah at a period subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.[39]

Date of Zephaniah. The testimony of the title, that Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah, that is, between 639 and 608 B. C., is accepted by practically all

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[36] The present writer defended the originality of verses 9 and 10 in his commentary on the Minor Prophets, p. 541, but the interpretation there given seems less satisfactory to him now.

[37] See above, pp. 484–486. The statements made there are, in substance, applicable here.

[38] Verse 15.

[39] Of course the bare possibility of Zephaniah's authorship cannot be denied. The passage is highly poetic, and in the portrayal of the ideal future the imagination must have played a part. Is it legitimate to place limitations upon the enlightened imagination of a genius?

scholars as historically correct.[40] But if the prophet's activity continued for a short time only, may it be located more definitely within the period of thirty-one years covered by Josiah's rule? The reform of 621 divides the reign of Josiah into two parts. Does the work of Zephaniah belong to the earlier or to the later period?

In favor of the later date the following arguments have been advanced:[41] (1) Deut. 28, 29, 30 is quoted in Zeph. 1. 13, 15, 17 in a manner that shows the former book to have been well known; but the Law, which is identified with the Deuteronomic Code, was unknown, because lost, prior to 621 B. C. (2) The "*remnant* of Baal," in 1. 4, points to a period when much of the Baal worship had been removed; which means, after the reform movement in 621 B. C. (3) The condemnation of the "king's sons," in 1. 8, presupposes that at the time the words were spoken they had attained the age of moral responsibility; which, on account of the age of Josiah at the time of his accession,[42] again points to the

[40] The most important exception is Koenig (*Einleitung*, p. 352), who dates the prophecy in the decade following the death of Josiah. But his arguments in favor of the later date find their sole strength in improbable interpretations. For instance, he thinks that 2. 15 presupposes the fall of Nineveh as an accomplished fact; that the condemnation of the Ethiopians, in 2. 12—he identifies them with the Egyptians —was called forth by the carrying away of Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23. 34); that 3. 8 points to the advance of Nebuchadrezzar against Jerusalem in 597 B. C. But none of Koenig's arguments are in any sense conclusive, while all the internal evidence points to Josiah's reign. Zephaniah's silence concerning the king in his condemnation of the corrupt court practices (1. 8, 9) can hardly be accidental; if it is intentional, it points to a time when the throne was occupied by a virtuous and God-fearing monarch like Josiah.

[41] Most recent scholars favor the earlier date; among those accepting the later date are Delitzsch, Kleinert, Schwally, Schulz and Lippl.

[42] Josiah was eight years old when he came to the throne (2 Kings 22. 1).

later period. These arguments are inconclusive: (1) It is always difficult to prove which one of two similar passages is dependent on the other. In this case the resemblances are of such a general character that dependence of either passage on the other is improbable. (2) The expression "*remnant* of Baal," in 1. 4, if rightly interpreted, was equally appropriate before 621 B. C.[43] (3) The expression "king's sons," in 1. 8, may be equivalent to "royal princes," without reference to Josiah's children.[44]

While the arguments commonly urged in favor of the later date have little force, there are several considerations pointing strongly to the years prior to 621 B. C.: (1) The youth of the king would make it relatively easy for the royal princes, some of whom were older than the king, to indulge in the excesses condemned in 1. 8, 9. (2) The idolatrous practices condemned in 1. 3, 5 were precisely those abolished by Josiah in 621, and while traces of them may have remained here and there, the

[43] There are three possible interpretations which would make the use of the expression quite appropriate before 621: (1) "The remnant" may mean "every vestige;" that is, everything there is of it; which would make the threat equivalent to "I will cut off Baal worship till not a trace of it is left." (2) Even if "remnant" is taken as equivalent to "that which has survived," it does not necessarily take us to a date later than 621; for, while the religious reform reached its climax during that year, Josiah, having been under prophetic influence from the time of his accession, undoubtedly made a beginning earlier, and there seems no good reason for doubting the essential correctness of 2 Chron. 34. 3, 4, which states that in the twelfth year of his reign Josiah "broke down the altars of the Baalim"; hence at any time subsequent to 627 one might speak of a "remnant of Baal." (3) Baal might be regarded as a type of all false worship; if so, the expression might be used before as well as after 621 B. C.

[44] The last two objections lose all their force if the Septuagint readings are substituted—in the first case, "the *names* of Baal" (compare Hos. 2. 16, 17), in the second, "the *house* of the king."

wholesale condemnation would be inexplicable during Josiah's reign after that date.[45] (3) The temper described in 1. 12 is explicable before 621 and after the death of Josiah in 608, but not between 621 and 608, when religious enthusiasm was widespread. (4) While the latter part of Josiah's reign lacks a suitable occasion, the prophecy finds an appropriate background during the earlier part.

The tone of the entire prophecy makes it certain that at the time the prophecy was delivered, a serious crisis was at hand, that a terrifying enemy was threatening the borders of Judah and of the surrounding nations. Now, during the latter part of the seventh century Judah was threatened by three different nations—by the Scythians, about 625, by the Egyptians, about 608, and by the Chaldeans, near the close of the century, when Jehoiakim was upon the throne of Judah. If the prophecy belongs to the reign of Josiah, the Chaldeans, who did not become a prominent factor in Asiatic history until after the death of Josiah, need not be considered. Schwally and others favoring the later date think that the Egyptians fill the horizon of the prophet; but (*a*) the description is so vague, and yet the terror so great that it seems more likely that the approaching foe was not as familiar to the prophet as the Egyptians must have been; (*b*) the Egyptians, though powerful, were hardly strong enough during the closing years of the seventh century to inspire the expectation that they would penetrate to distant Nineveh. Josiah thought that even he with his small army could check the advance of Pharaoh-necoh. (*c*) It is not improbable that the Ethiopians, in 2. 12, repre-

[45] The reign of Jehoiakim would warrant the bitter condemnation, but the prophecy cannot be assigned to that period (See above, p. 533).

sent, or at least include, the Egyptians. If so, the latter cannot be the dreaded enemy.[46] If the Chaldeans and Egyptians are excluded, the foe must be the Scythians; which again points to the earlier part of Josiah's reign, for the Scythians swept over western Asia about 625 B. C. The mysteriousness of the origin of the wild hordes of the Scythians "clothed them with just that vague terribleness which characterizes Zephaniah's description." Just as Joel saw in the plague of locusts a harbinger of the day of Yahweh, so Zephaniah saw in the approach of the Scythians the dawn of the terrible day when the present world-order would be destroyed.

At the time the prophecy was delivered the advance of the Scythians against Egypt seems to have been still in the future, but imminent;[47] hence the prophet's activity may be placed between 630 and 625, perhaps in 626 B. C. If this is the correct date, Zephaniah and Jeremiah began their ministries in the same year.[48]

Times of the Prophet. The political situation of Judah which forms the background of Zephaniah's prophecies is described in connection with Jeremiah;[49] hence little needs to be said here, except, perhaps, a few additional words regarding the Scythians, a non-Semitic race of barbarians, who swept in great hordes over western Asia during the seventh century B. C.[50] According to Herod-

[46] A. B. Davidson says: "An historical nation like Egypt, which had always lain within Israel's horizon, was not fitted to be the executor of Yahweh's judgment upon the known world."

[47] 1. 14.

[48] It is thought by many that the earlier utterances of Jeremiah had their origin in the Scythian crisis (See on *Jeremiah*, footnote 34).

[49] See vol. I, pp. 298–302. For an outline of events between 661 and 606 B. C. see J. M. P. Smith, *Zephaniah*, pp. 159-165.

[50] See above, p. 501. *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Scythians"; R. W. Rogers, *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, II, p. 289.

otus,[51] they were masters of western Asia from the Caucasus to the borders of Egypt for twenty-eight years. When they threatened to invade Egypt the Pharaoh, Psammetichus, prevailed upon them by rich gifts to desist.[52] Tradition describes them as cruel and bloodthirsty, ruthless destroyers of everyone and everything that came into their way. Well might Zephaniah tremble when he heard of the approach of these merciless barbarians.

The utterances of Zephaniah, though few and brief, do not leave us in doubt concerning social, moral, and religious conditions in his day.[53] Social injustice and moral corruption were widespread;[54] luxury and extravagance were to be seen on every hand, and fortunes were heaped up by the cruel oppression of the poor.[55] The religious situation was equally bad. The reaction under Manasseh came near making an end of Yahweh worship;[56] Amon followed in the footsteps of his father, so that the outlook was exceedingly dark when Josiah ascended the throne. Fortunately, the latter was under prophetic influence from the beginning and, assisted by the faithful within the nation, undertook a sweeping religious reform, which reached its culmination in the eighteenth year of his reign. When Zephaniah prophesied the reform was still in the future, and his utterances give a

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[51] 1. 103ff.

[52] Breasted thinks that it was not gold but the strong arm of Psammetichus that drove the Scythians from the borders of Egypt (*History of Egypt*, p. 580).

[53] Additional information may be secured from the early discourses of Jeremiah and from 2 Kings 21 to 23.

[54] 3. 1, 3, 7.

[55] 1. 8, 9.

[56] 2 Kings 21.

fair idea of the corrupt state of religion: The Baalim were worshiped and the high places flourished,[57] the hosts of heaven were adored upon the housetops,[58] a half-hearted Yahweh worship was practiced,[59] while multitudes turned entirely from following Yahweh.[60] When the reactionary Manasseh was allowed to sit undisturbed upon the throne for more than half a century, many grew skeptical and began to wonder if Yahweh took any interest at all in the affairs of the nation.[61] Conditions could not be otherwise since the religious leaders had become misleaders.[62]

The Prophet. The title, 1. 1, which is undoubtedly a later addition, by the compiler of the book of The Twelve, supplies the only available direct information concerning the person and life of the prophet Zephaniah. In addition, a few facts concerning his life may be gathered from his utterances. From the fact that, contrary to general Old Testament practice,[63] the prophet's ancestry is traced back four generations,[64] the inference has been drawn that the last-named ancestor, Hezekiah, was a man of prominence; indeed, none other than king Hezekiah of Judah, the contemporary of Isaiah and Micah.[65] Two objections have been urged against the identification: (1) The omission of the title "king of Judah" after the name "Hezekiah." The omission can easily be explained as due

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[57] 1. 4.
[58] 1. 5.
[59] 1. 5.
[60] 1. 6.
[61] "Yahweh will not do good, neither will he do evil" (1. 12).
[62] 3. 4.
[63] Compare Isa. 1. 1; Jer. 1. 1; Hos. 1. 1; etc.
[64] 1. 1.
[65] Isa. 36 to 39; 2 Kings 18 to 20; compare Jer. 26. 18.

to the presence of the same title in connection with Josiah's name; a repetition would have made the sentence awkward. (2) The fact that in the ruling line only two generations appear between Hezekiah and Josiah, namely, Manasseh and Amon, while between Hezekiah and Zephaniah three names occur, namely, Amariah, Gedaliah, and Cushi. However, Manasseh had a very long reign, and he was forty-five years of age when Amon was born;[66] which leaves enough room for an additional generation in another line of the same family. If Zephaniah was of royal blood, his condemnation of the royal princes,[67] with whose conduct he appears to have been intimately familiar,[68] becomes of great interest.[69]

An ancient tradition[70] declares that he was of the tribe of Simeon, which would make it impossible for him to have been of royal blood; but the origin and value of the tradition are uncertain. Undoubtedly he lived in the southern kingdom; that he lived in Jerusalem may be inferred from the statement, "I will cut off from *this* place"[71] as well as from his intimate knowledge of the topography of the city.[72] The length of his prophetic ministry is unknown; however, it is not improbable that, as in the case of Amos, his public activity was short, and that, after delivering his message of judgment in connection with a great crisis, he retired to private life,

[66] Compare 2 Kings 21. 1, 19.

[67] 1. 8.

[68] 1. 8ff.

[69] In a similar manner Isaiah, who may have been of royal blood, and certainly was of high social standing (see vol. I, p. 198), condemned without hesitation the shortcomings of the rulers and the court in his day.

[70] In the *Lives of the Prophets*, Chapter X; see above, p. 505.

[71] 1. 4.

[72] For instance, 1. 10, 11.

though his interest in religious reforms may have continued.[73]

Teaching. The teaching of those sections of the book which may be regarded as genuine, resembles closely that of the earlier prophets. Yahweh is a God of righteousness and holiness, who expects of his worshipers a life in harmony with his will. His sway extends over other nations, though Israel is his chosen people; which, however, on account of rebellion and apostasy, must suffer severe punishment. Wholesale conversion seems out of the question, but a remnant may escape. In emphasizing these and similar truths Zephaniah follows in the footsteps of his predecessors, especially, as Smend has pointed out, Isaiah. He adds little, but attempts, with much moral and spiritual fervor, to impress upon his contemporaries the fundamental truths of the religion of Yahweh. There is, however, one point in the teaching of Zephaniah that deserves special mention, namely, his emphasis on the *Day of Yahweh.* Earlier prophets had spoken of it; Amos had described it in language similar to that employed by Zephaniah;[74] but the latter surpasses all his predecessors in the emphasis on this terrible manifestation of Yahweh. Indeed, his entire teaching centers around this day, and in his utterances are found the germs of the apocalyptic visions which are so common in later utterances of an eschatological nature. Concerning this day he says that (1) it is a day of terror;[75] (2) it is imminent;[76] (3) it comes as a judgment for sin;[77] (4) it falls upon all creation, man and beast, Hebrew

[73] Compare 2 Kings 23. 2.

[74] Compare 1. 15 with Amos 5. 18-20.

[75] 1. 15.

[76] 1. 14.

[77] 1. 17.

and foreigner;[78] (5) it is accompanied by great convulsions in nature;[79] (6) from its terrors only a remnant will escape.[80]

A few points in the teaching of the secondary sections deserve mention: (1) The sublime picture of the glories of the Messianic age, with which the book closes, is silent concerning the person of the Messianic king. Whatever is accomplished is accomplished by Yahweh himself. (2) The world outlook is even more marked than in the genuine utterances. The terrors of the day of Yahweh will fall upon all; similarly, from all the nations of the earth converts will be won to Yahweh, to bring offerings to him.[81] (3) The statement in 2. 11, "men shall worship him, every one from his place," marks an advance over Isa. 2. 2; Mic. 4. 1, in the direction of the words of Jesus, in John 4. 21, "the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father."

10. The Book of Haggai

Name. The etymology and meaning of the name "Haggai"[1] are uncertain. Some render it "festival" or "festive,"[2] and infer from this translation that the prophet was born on a festival day;[3] others think the name to be

[78] 1. 2, 3; 2. 4-15.
[79] 1. 15.
[80] 2. 3; 3. 9-13.
[81] 3. 9, 10.

[1] Hebrew, חַגַּי, *Haggay*; Septuagint, Ἀγγαῖος, *'Aggaios*, Vulgate, *Aggæus*, or, *Haggæus*.

[2] Perhaps, more accurately, "my festival."

[3] André calls attention to the fact that all four prophecies were delivered on feast days (*Le Prophète Aggée*, p. 8); but while this is true of the first two utterances, there is no evidence that the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month was ever celebrated as a feast day among the Jews.

indicative of "the joyous character of the predictions which the prophet delivered."[4] Still others, considering the name in its present form to be an abbreviation, give to it the meaning "feast of Yahweh."[5] While these suggestions present various possibilities, it seems wisest to admit that both derivation and significance are still doubtful.

Contents and Outline. The book contains four separate utterances, each one dealing with a particular theme,[6] but all centering more or less directly around a common topic, namely, the rebuilding of the temple; and an historical section,[7] which describes the effects of the first discourse.

Title: The prophet and his commission (1. 1).

I. Message of Rebuke for Religious Indifference (1. 2-11).

1. The people's selfishness (1. 2-4).
2. The divine displeasure; exhortation to resume building operations (1. 5-11).

II. Result of the Rebuke: Building of the Temple (1. 12-15).

1. The people's fear (1. 12).

[4] These explanations assume further that the book of Haggai, like that of Malachi, was originally an anonymous work, and that for the reasons indicated the name was added at a later time.

[5] חַגַּיָּה, *Ḥaggiyyāh*. The name "Haggai" has been found on a tablet coming from the fifth century, unearthed at Nippur.

[6] The first, 1. 1-11, is a rebuke of the indifference responsible for the neglect of the Temple and an exhortation to resume building operations; the second, 2. 1-9, a description of the future glory of the new Temple; the third, 2. 10-19, a promise that the completion of the Temple will mark the dawn of an era of blessedness; the fourth, 2. 20-23, the announcement of the exaltation of the civil ruler Zerubbabel to be king of the new kingdom of God.

[7] The preaching of Haggai stirred the consciences of the people so that after a few weeks they began to make preparation for the rebuilding of the house of Yahweh, 1. 12-15.

2. Promise of divine cooperation (1. 13).
3. Beginning of the work (1. 14, 15).

III. Glory of the New Temple (2. 1-9)

1. Yahweh's presence with the builders (2. 1-4).
2. The Temple's future glory (2. 5-9).

IV. Completion of the Temple a Guarantee of New Blessings (2. 10-19)

1. The unclean more contagious than the clean (2. 10-13).
2. Offerings cannot atone for the people's neglectfulness (2. 14).
3. Indifference—calamity; Zeal—prosperity (2. 15-19).

V. Exaltation of Zerubbabel (2. 20-23)

1. Overthrow of the nations (2. 20-22).
2. Messiahship of Zerubbabel (2. 23).

Unity and Origin. Few questions have been raised regarding the essential unity of the book of Haggai, apart from more or less extensive editorial glosses and additions. Of the attempts to show that some of the utterances came from some one other than Haggai two may be noted: André attempts to prove[8] that 2. 10-19 represents a prophecy delivered by an unknown prophet on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of the first year[9] of Darius. In support of this view he advances the following arguments: (1) Verses 20-23 furnish the conclusion of the oracle in 1-9; hence 10-19 interrupt the development of the thought; (2) the point of view is not that of the rest of the book; (3) the oracle is addressed *unto* Haggai, not, like the other utterances, to the people *by* Haggai; (4) there are some contradictions between the thought of these verses and that of the rest

[8] *Le Prophète Aggée*, pp. 24ff.

[9] The present text assigns the oracle to the second year of Darius.

of the book;[10] (5) the passage reveals striking peculiarities in vocabulary. The alleged force of these arguments rests almost entirely upon misapprehension or misinterpretation: (1) Can the oracle in 20-23 be regarded as the conclusion of 1-9? Is not the former an independent utterance? (2) There is no such difference in point of view as is assumed by André; the whole book reflects the priestly point of view characteristic of the postexilic period. (3) The third objection cannot be urged against the oracle itself. The difference, if real, is confined to the editorial additions.[11] (4) Verses 17, 18 present some difficulties, but with a proper translation and interpretation of the passage the alleged contradictions vanish.[12] (5) While the passage reveals linguistic peculiarities they may be explained as due to difference in subject matter; they certainly are not of a character to prove diversity of authorship.[13] Evidently, it is quite safe to assert that André's attempt has not been successful.

The same judgment must be passed upon Boehme's effort to show 2. 20-23 to be a later addition.[14] His arguments are: (1) The absence of "the prophet" after the name "Haggai";[15] (2) the statement that the words were addressed *unto* Haggai, rather than *by* Haggai;[16] (3) the unnecessary repetition to Zerubbabel of a proph-

[10] Compare especially 2. 17, 18 with 1. 10, 11, 15.

[11] Moreover, the original reading in 2. 1 may have been *unto;* compare 2. 20.

[12] For a detailed discussion see H. G. Mitchell, *Haggai*, pp. 70, 71.

[13] See H. G. Mitchell, *Haggai*, pp. 29, 30; K. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, p. 327.

[14] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1887, pp. 215-217.

[15] Compare 2. 20 with 1. 1; 2. 1, 10.

[16] Compare the same verses; note the objection of André to verses 10-19; also footnote 11.

ecy which he had previously heard;[17] (4) the use of the phrase "the second time." The inconclusiveness of these arguments is self-evident: (1) The absence of the phrase "the prophet" is of no special significance; moreover, the Septuagint, which has the words, may reflect the original reading. (2) The second objection has to do with words of the editor, not of the author of the oracle. (3) Is verse 21 an unnecessary repetition of 6b? Is it not needed as an introduction to the principal announcement in verses 22, 23? (4) The phrase "the second time" by no means points necessarily to the activity of a later writer; it may readily be explained as referring to a second oracle of a prophet who had previously spoken. (5) Moreover, would a later writer, who must have known that Zerubbabel never came to occupy the unique position foretold, express his hope for the future in such words?

An examination of all the available evidence seems to show that there is insufficient reason for questioning the originality of any one of the four prophetic oracles in the book. The two chapters evidently contain summaries of Haggai's utterances put in their present form by an editor, possibly a younger contemporary of the prophet, who desired to give an account of the prophet's contribution to the rebuilding of the Temple.[18] The

[17] Compare especially verse 21 with 6b.

[18] A different, though less probable, view of the origin of the book is advocated by Klostermann (*Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, pp. 212, 213), who believes that the book of Haggai and Zech. 1 to 8 constituted originally one continuous work, edited by Zechariah, who sought to bring together and arrange in chronological order all the prophecies which had to do with the rebuilding of the Temple. Similarly, Rothstein (*Genealogie des Koenigs Jojachin*, pp. 38-41) sees in the book a part of an historic work, intended to narrate the events connected with the rebuilding of the Temple.

same editor is responsible for the presence of the historical section in 1. 12-15. This theory of the origin of the book best explains the references to the prophet in the third person in 1. 1, 12-15; 2. 1, 10, 12, 13, 20, as well as the presence of the narrative section in 1. 12-15 and the use of the title "the prophet" after the name in 1. 1; 2. 1, 10.

Times of the Prophet. The four prophecies of Haggai are said to have been uttered in the second year of Darius Hystaspis, king of Persia, that is, in 520 B. C. During that year he spoke on four occasions, on the first day of the sixth month,[19] the twenty-first day of the seventh month,[20] and twice on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month.[21]

Since Haggai was the first of the postexilic prophets a brief survey of the historical situation which forms the background of his prophetic activity may well begin with the first return from exile. Babylon submitted to Cyrus in 538 B. C.; soon after, according to the biblical record, he gave the Jews permission to return to their former homes, and in the spring of 537 B. C. a large company, between forty and fifty thousand, started on the homeward journey. On reaching Jerusalem they immediately set up the altar of burnt offerings,[22] and, according to Ezra 3. 8-13, laid, in the second year, the foundation of the Temple. However, building operations soon ceased, for reasons easily understood: (1) During their stay in Babylon the exiles had learned to do without the Temple; only the religious zealots, always

[19] 1. 1.
[20] 2. 1.
[21] 2. 10, 20.
[22] Ezra 3. 2ff.; compare Hag. 2. 14.

in the minority, would miss it. (2) The opposition of the Samaritans and other surrounding tribes furnished a ready excuse to the indifferent Jews. (3) Limited resources and poverty resulting from the failure of crops[23] and from the devastation wrought by the Persian armies on their way to Egypt could and would be urged. (4) Most important of all, the nonfulfillment of the pre-exilic and exilic prophecies concerning the glories of the restored community tended to create a spirit of religious indifference and skepticism. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why building operations begun in 536 B. C. and continued for a while with enthusiasm might have come to a complete standstill.

At least a brief reference must be made to a somewhat different view of the progress of events during the latter part of the sixth century B. C. Taking as a starting point the silence of Haggai and Zechariah regarding a return in 537 and the laying of the Temple foundations in 536, and the alleged unreliability of the author of Ezra-Nehemiah, some scholars insist (1) that there was no return from exile in 537 and (2) that the foundations of the Temple were not laid until 520 B. C., following the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah. Without entering into a detailed discussion,[24] it may be sufficient to state (1) that the evidence against the reliability of the statement that the foundations of the Temple were laid in 536 B C., while perhaps not overwhelmingly conclusive, is of considerable weight, and (2) that in the face of all the arguments presented the present writer is still

[23] 1. 6.

[24] A full discussion of this perplexing problem may be found in F. C. Eiselen, *The Psalms and Other Sacred Writings*, pp. 302-308; compare also H. G. Mitchell, *Haggai*, pp. 6-9.

inclined to insist that much may be said in favor of belief in an important return of exiles in 537 B. C.

While the postexilic community was struggling against great odds to establish itself in and near Jerusalem, important events were taking place in the eastern world. Cyrus died in 530 or 529 B. C., leaving to his son Cambyses an empire extending from Lydia in the west to India in the east. Cambyses, who reigned until 522 B. C., added Egypt to his possession. Following the death of Cambyses, who had no son, several claimants to the throne appeared, the most troublesome being Gaumata, who claimed to be the son of Cyrus; but after a reign of seven months he was assassinated, and Darius Hystaspis ascended the throne. He found the empire in a state of extreme restlessness; rebellions broke out everywhere; province after province revolted; in Babylon two pretenders attempted, in rapid succession, to throw off the Persian rule. The whole empire was shaken from one end to the other.[25]

Haggai and Zechariah, like their predecessors in the prophetic office, read and interpreted the signs of the times. To them the widespread rebellions were an indication that the doom of the Persian empire was at hand[26] and the seventy years of exile[27] were drawing to a close. They were equally convinced that, with the hostile world power removed, the way would be cleared for the establishment of the kingdom of God. Moreover, in the thought of the two prophets the establishment of the divine rule upon earth was closely connected with the re-

[25] A clear outline of the history of western Asia during the latter half of the sixth century B. C., based on the best and most reliable sources of information available is found in H. G. Mitchell, *Haggai*, pp. 3-24.

[26] Hag. 2. 6, 7, 22.

[27] Jer. 25. 11.

building of the Temple and the exaltation of a descendant of David; hence the earnest exhortations to resume building operations[28] and the promises to Zerubbabel, the chosen servant of Yahweh.[29]

Little can be learned from the utterances of Haggai and Zechariah concerning moral and religious conditions in Jerusalem around 520 B. C. The outstanding feature seems to have been religious indifference, due to the causes already enumerated, especially to disappointment. The great prophet of the exile had pictured the future in the brightest colors, and thus had raised the hopes and expectations of the exiles, inspired by the preexilic prophets, to the highest pitch. Then, when the years passed without bringing a realization of the hopes, indifference and skepticism settled upon them. Why should they spend their limited resources in promoting the worship of Yahweh, when the latter failed to fulfill the promises made by his spokesmen? Consequently, the people looked after their own comforts, at the same time neglecting the interests of the sanctuary,[30] excusing themselves with the plea that the time for the building of the Temple had not yet arrived.[31] However, this did not do away entirely with the bringing of sacrifices and offerings[32] and the observance, in other respects, of the ritual law.[33] Otherwise we are left in the dark concerning conditions in Judah at this time, for the abuses condemned so severely by Ezra-Nehemiah and Malachi seem

[28] For instance, 1. 2-11.

[29] 2. 23.

[30] 1. 9.

[31] 1. 2.

[32] 2. 14.

[33] 2. 11-13; compare also Zech., chapters 7 and 8, which show that feasts and fasts were observed.

to have developed subsequently to Haggai and Zechariah.[34]

The Prophet. Scarcely anything is known of the personal life of the prophet Haggai. He is mentioned again only in Ezra 5. 1 and 6. 14 as encouraging, in cooperation with Zechariah, the rebuilding of the Temple; but these statements may be based upon the book bearing the name of Haggai, and consequently may have no independent value.[35] The prophet appears upon the scene suddenly in 520 B. C. and disappears just as suddenly. Nothing is known of his life before or after his preaching. Chiefly on the basis of 2. 3 it has been suggested that he was born in Judah before the catastrophe of 586 B. C., and that he was one of a small company among the returned exiles who had seen the former Temple in its glory. If so, he must have been an old man when he prophesied; which supposition agrees with the brevity of his public activity, for a short time after 520 Zechariah appears as the leading prophet in Jerusalem.[36] Some Jewish traditions also suggest that Haggai was a man of mature, if not advanced, age when he returned to Palestine. With this agrees Augustine, who reports that both Haggai and Zechariah prophesied in Babylon concerning the return, before they were released from exile. Other early Christian traditions state that Haggai was born in Babylonia, returned to Jerusalem while still a young man, saw the Temple completed, died in Jerusalem, and was buried near the priests, according to

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[34] See below, pp. 604–608.

[35] There is insufficient reason for questioning the historicity of the prophet Haggai, as is done by some who regard the book as originally anonymous.

[36] Zech. 7. 1ff.

Hesychius, because he was of "priestly stock." Some of the ancient versions credit Haggai with the writing of psalms.[37]

Little value can be ascribed to these extra-biblical traditions and uncritical guesses. Hence we must be content with the few hints given in the book of Haggai, and the only information furnished there is that he delivered four prophecies in the second year of Darius, king of Persia, and that his supreme interest lay in the rebuilding of the Temple of Yahweh.[38]

Teaching. Haggai was a man of one idea. From beginning to end he urged, without conventional eloquence or poetic flights of the imagination, but with simple and earnest words of warning, exhortation, and promise, the speedy restoration of the Temple of Yahweh; and the success which attended his exhortations sufficiently justified the use of what has been called a "meager and starved" style. The spirit and tone of the entire book make it clear that Haggai assigned to the Temple a unique place in the religious life of the Jews. True, the preexilic prophets also considered the Temple the dwelling place of Yahweh, but their teaching dwelt almost exclusively upon weightier spiritual and ethical matters. The change in emphasis was due, not to inferior religious capacity and insight, but to a change in environment. Conditions in Jerusalem after the exile were far different from what they had been in the eighth

[37] Septuagint, Pss. 137; 145 to 148; Peshitto, Pss. 125; 126; 145 to 148; Old Latin, Psa. 64; Vulgate, Pss. 111; 145; 146.

[38] Mitchell's conclusion is expressed in these words: "On the whole, therefore, it seems safest to . . . regard the prophet as a patriotic Jewish layman of unusual zeal for, and therefore, perhaps, unusual acquaintance with, the religion in which he had been born and reared" (*Haggai*, p. 26).

century B. C.; as a prophet of Yahweh Haggai must adapt himself and his message to the needs of the new age. Whatever may have been true in other days, the Jews of the latter part of the sixth century were not prepared to appreciate the lofty conceptions of the presence of Yahweh that could dispense with a house made with hands. As had been the ark in the ages gone by, so now the Temple was the external symbol of the presence of Yahweh, and the common people still needed this material Temple, if they were to continue the worship of Yahweh at all. Moreover, with the central national government gone, a new bond was needed to hold together the different elements in the local community as well as the exiles scattered among the nations. In a religious community what institution could serve this purpose better than a common center of worship, a place to which the hearts of faithful Jews everywhere might turn, assured that there they could meet their God and hold intercourse with him? Is it, then, too much to say that the very existence of Jewish religion depended, in the days of Haggai, on the rebuilding of the Temple? If that was the supreme need of the hour, Haggai, by pleading so persistently for the restoration of the Temple, rendered a service of incalculable moment. Surely, he cannot be held responsible for the illegitimate perversion of his teaching by subsequent generations.

Other noteworthy points in the teaching of Haggai are: (1) He calls attention to the covenant relation between Yahweh and Israel, which explains the former's continued care for the latter,[39] and insists that this covenant will endure forever.[40] (2) He agrees with the pre-

[39] 2. 5.

[40] 1. 13; 2. 4.

exilic prophets in declaring that sacrifice is not the essential thing in the sight of Yahweh.[41] (3) Sharing the earlier prophets' ideas on the subject of calamity and prosperity, he teaches that the former is an expression of divine wrath, a punishment for sin, while the latter is an expression of divine favor, a reward for piety.[42] (4) Haggai looks forward to a great world judgment resulting in the overthrow of the Persian empire; this cataclysm to prepare the way for the establishment of the kingdom of Yahweh upon earth.[43] (5) The prophet's Messianic hope centers around an offspring of the dynasty of David, namely, Zerubbabel, whom he describes as the servant of Yahweh, his chosen one, the object of his affection.[44] (6) There is a note of universalism in the message of Haggai. In 2. 7 he expresses the hope that the nations of the earth, overawed by Yahweh's majesty and power, will recognize his supremacy and bring their precious things as offerings to him.

The presentation of all these truths is profoundly influenced by the prophet's central idea. He alludes to the covenant for the purpose of encouraging the people to greater zeal in their building operations; sacrifice is mentioned to show that it cannot atone for the people's neglect of the Temple; their calamity or prosperity is determined by their attitude toward the restoration of the house of Yahweh; the overthrow and conversion of the nations will result in the enriching of the Temple; the establishment of the kingdom of Yahweh and the exaltation of Zerubbabel are regarded as the supreme

[41] 2. 14.

[42] 1. 6-11; 2. 15-19.

[43] 2. 6, 7, 21, 22.

[44] 2. 23; he also thinks of Yahweh as ruling forever in his Temple (2. 9).

manifestations of the divine favor; which, however, will be theirs only on condition that they speedily build a dwelling place for Yahweh.

II. The Book of Zechariah

Name. The name "Zechariah,"[1] which means "Yahweh remembers," is borne by no less than twenty-nine different persons named in the Old Testament. According to the Chronicler it was the name of at least five men in the days of David,[2] but there is reason for believing that it was not much used prior to the eighth century B. C.

Contents and Outline. The book in its present form falls naturally into two parts, chapters 1 to 8 and chapters 9 to 14. The first part opens with an appeal in which the prophet urges the people to return to Yahweh. Disobedience may bring to the present generation a fate similar to that suffered by the fathers.[3] About three months after the delivery of the first message there came to the prophet in a single night eight symbolical visions, the significance of which was explained to him by an heavenly interpreter.[4] All the visions are linked together

[1] Hebrew זְכַרְיָה, *Zekharyāh*, Septuagint *Ζαχαρίας*, *Zacharías*, Vulgate, *Zacharias*.

[2] 1 Chron. 15. 18; 24. 25; 26. 2, 11; 27. 11; compare also 9. 37; 15. 4.

[3] 1. 1-6.

[4] 1. 7 to 6. 8: (1) The angelic horsemen—the overthrow of the nations is at hand; (2) the four horns and the four smiths—judgment upon the nations; (3) the man with the measuring line—the glorious restoration of Zion; (4) the trial of the high priest—cleansing of the remnant and the advent of "Branch"; (5) the golden candlestick and the two olive trees—Zerubbabel, with divine cooperation, will carry his divinely appointed task to completion; (6) the flying roll—the curse of God upon evildoers; (7) the woman in the ephah—removal of sin from the promised land; (8) the four chariots—the judgment upon the nations is imminent.

by a common purpose, namely, "the encouragement of the Jews to continue the work of restoring the Temple, of rebuilding the city, and of reestablishing the theocratic government." The account of the visions is followed by the story of a symbolical act, the crowning of the high priest Joshua, intended to symbolize the exaltation of "Branch" to Messianic rule.[5] Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the relative value of ceremonial and moral requirements. From the experiences of the past the present generation might have learned that the latter alone constitute the essential element in the religion of Yahweh.[6] Reaffirming Yahweh's jealousy for Zion, the prophet then pictures the prosperity and glory in store for Jerusalem,[7] in which foreign nations will be anxious to have a share.[8]

The second division consists of a series of loosely connected utterances, chiefly apocalyptic in character, and all dealing with the events leading up to the final triumph of the kingdom of God. The hostile nations surrounding Judah will perish, while Jerusalem will escape unharmed;[9] then the Messianic king will appear, the captives still in exile will be restored and, after a bitter struggle resulting in the confounding of the hostile nations, exalted to glory.[10] An exhortation to repentance[11] is followed by another promise of deliverance, restoration, and exaltation.[12] Taking a look into the past, the prophet describes, in the form of an allegory, Yahweh's dealings with his people, his wrath because of the latter's

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[5] 6. 9-15.
[6] 7. 1-14.
[7] 8. 1-17.
[8] 8. 18-23.
[9] 9. 1-8.
[10] 9. 9-17.
[11] 10. 1, 2.
[12] 10. 3 to 11. 3.

ingratitude, and the resulting judgment;[13] in the end Yahweh's compassion will assert itself in the salvation of a remnant.[14] A new beginning is made in 12. 1. The remaining portion of the book divides itself naturally into two parts, 12. 1 to 13. 6 and 14. 1-21. The former falls naturally into three divisions, 12. 1-9, 12. 10-14, 13. 1-6. The first of these passages pictures an attack upon Jerusalem by the nations of the earth; Yahweh interferes and brings deliverance to Judah and Jerusalem.[15] The people thus saved from disaster will enjoy rich spiritual blessings, provided they turn to Yahweh in a spirit of humility and penitence.[16] The penitential mourning and supplication will not be in vain; a complete moral and spiritual transformation will be wrought in the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, resulting in a life of intimate fellowship with their God.[17] In chapter 14 the prophet pictures a new conflict between Jerusalem and the nations. When the success of the nations seems assured, Yahweh will appear to save a remnant and set up his kingdom;[18] from Jerusalem two streams of living water will go forth bringing blessing and prosperity to the whole land;[19] the nations will suffer defeat;[20] some of the survivors will turn to Yahweh, the rest will be smitten with drought,[21] while Judah and Jerusalem will be "holy unto Yahweh."[22]

Title: The prophet and his commission (1. 1).

I. Messages of Exhortation, Consolation, and Encouragement (1. 2 to 8. 23)

1. Call to repentance (1. 2-6).

[13] 11. 4-16.
[14] 11. 17; 13. 7-9.
[15] 12. 1-9.
[16] 12. 10-14.
[17] 13. 1-6.
[18] 14. 1-7.
[19] 14. 8-11.
[20] 14. 12-15.
[21] 14. 16-19.
[22] 14. 20, 21.

2. Eight night visions and their interpretation (1. 7 to 6. 8).
   (1) The angelic horsemen (1. 7-17).
   (2) The four horns and the four smiths (1. 18-21).
   (3) The man with the measuring line (2. 1-13).
   (4) Trial and acquittal of the high priest Joshua (3. 1-10).
   (5) The golden candlestick and the two olive trees (4. 1-14).
   (6) The flying roll (5. 1-4).
   (7) The woman in the ephah (5. 5-11).
   (8) The four chariots with horses of different colors (6. 1-8).
3. Symbolic crowning of the high priest Joshua (6. 9-15).
4. Relative importance of ceremonial and moral requirements (7. 1 to 8. 23).
   (1) Occasion of the prophetic utterance (7. 1-3).
   (2) Fasting not an essential element of true religion (7. 4-6).
   (3) Essential requirements of Yahweh; disregard of them always followed by punishment (7. 7-14).
   (4) The time of redemption at hand (8. 1-8).
   (5) Message of encouragement and admonition (8. 9-17).
   (6) Fasting to be changed into rejoicing (8. 18-23).

II. The Final Triumph of the Kingdom of Yahweh (9. 1 to 14. 21).

1. Oracles dealing with the establishment of the new theocracy (9. 1 to 11. 17; 13. 7-9).
   (1) Judgment upon the surrounding nations; preservation of Jerusalem (9. 1-8).
   (2) The Messianic king and his reign (9. 9, 10).
   (3) Deliverance and exaltation of the Jews (9. 11-17).
   (4) Exhortation to return to Yahweh (10. 1, 2).
   (5) Restoration of the Jews and overthrow of the hostile nations (10. 3 to 11. 3).
      a. Rejuvenation of Ephraim and Judah (10. 3-7).
      b. Restoration of the exiles from Assyria and Egypt (10. 8-12).
      c. Lamentation of the humiliated enemies (11. 1-3).
   (6) Allegory of the good shepherd (11. 4-14).
      a. The shepherd's loving care (11. 4-6).
      b. The people's lack of appreciation (11. 7, 8).
      c. Withdrawal of the good shepherd (11. 9-14).

(7) Allegory of the foolish shepherd (11. 15-17; 13. 7-9).
a. Conduct of the foolish shepherd (11. 15, 16).
b. Overthrow of the foolish shepherd (11. 17).
c. Fate of the shepherd's flock (13. 7-9).

2. Various utterances concerning the future of the people of Yahweh (12. 1 to 13. 6; 14. 1-21).
(1) Marvelous deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem (12. 1-9).
(2) Penitential mourning and supplication (12. 10-14).
(3) Purification of Jerusalem; removal of all obstacles to direct communion with Yahweh (13. 1-6).
(4) Final conflict and triumph of the kingdom of Yahweh (14. 1-21).
a. Capture of Jerusalem and its deliverance (14. 1-5).
b. The day of Yahweh (14. 6, 7).
c. Fertility and felicity of the whole land (14. 8-11).
d. Destruction of the hostile nations (14. 12-15).
e. Conversion of a remnant of the nations (14. 16-19).
f. Judah and Jerusalem holy unto Yahweh (14. 20, 21).

Unity and Date. Since between chapters 8 and 9 a distinct break may be noticed, it has become customary, as has already been stated, to divide the entire book into two parts, chapters 1 to 8 and chapters 9 to 14. The utterances contained in the first eight chapters are ascribed in their headings to Zechariah,[23] but no statements to this effect are found in chapters 9 to 14. This in itself does not necessarily point to diversity of authorship, for it is not obligatory to place the name of the author at the head of each separate oracle; the name in the headings of the earlier chapters might be thought to cover the utterances in the later chapters. For other reasons, however, most Old Testament scholars believe that chapters 9 to 14 do not come from Zechariah, the author of chapters 1 to 8. This makes it necessary to consider, first of all, the unity of the book, to see whether it is the work of a single author or of two or more; only

[23] 1. 1, 7; 7. 1.

when this question is settled is it possible to consider intelligently the matter of the date or dates, to which the various oracles may be assigned.

Chapters 1 to 8. All scholars are agreed that chapters 1 to 8, at least in substance,[24] come from Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo,[25] and that the prophecies contained in these chapters were delivered in the second and fourth years of Darius, that is, in 520 and 518 B. C. The historical situation in western Asia, as it affected Judah during this period, is sketched in connection with Haggai;[26] but it may not be amiss to point out how the internal evidence confirms the testimony of the chronological notes: The Temple and the city walls were still in ruins;[27] the foundation of the Temple had been laid, but the completion of the building seemed far distant;[28] peace had been restored throughout the Persian Empire;[29] the nonfulfillment of the earlier prophecies had caused the people to lose confidence in the civil and religious leaders,[30] and to doubt the reality of the divine interest and power.[31] All this was true in 520 B. C., and the messages contained in chapters 1 to 6 were admirably adapted to the needs of that time; moreover, they were not without effect. The building enterprise was resumed, and two years later sufficient progress had been made to raise the question whether the time had not

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[24] H. G. Mitchell gives tables covering twelve pages "to show to what extent the deliberate modification of the text has been carried, also in what degree it has suffered from additions, omissions, and distortions through the fault of careless or ignorant transcribers" (*Zechariah*, pp. 84-97).

[25] 1. 1, 7; 7. 1.

[26] See above, pp. 546–550.

[27] 1. 7-17.

[28] 4. 6-10.

[29] 1. 7-21.

[30] Chapters 3, 4.

[31] 1. 16.

arrived to discontinue the fasts instituted to commemorate events centering around the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.;[32] evidently, the prospects were becoming brighter.[33] In the light of this internal evidence there can hardly be any doubt that the prophecies in chapters 1 to 8 were uttered in 520 and 518 B. C., for the comfort, encouragement, and inspiration of the disheartened post-exilic community.[34]

Chapters 9 to 14. Until about the middle of the seventeenth century no doubts were expressed concerning the unity of the book of Zechariah, chapters 9 to 14 being assigned to the sixth-century Zechariah, who was universally accepted as the author of chapters 1 to 8 and, thus, of the entire book. In a discussion published in 1653 the Cambridge theologian Joseph Mede suggested that chapters 9 to 11 came, not from Zechariah, but from Jeremiah. He was led to this conclusion, partly by the testimony of Matt. 27. 9, which quotes Zech. 11. 13 as coming from Jeremiah, and partly by a study of the contents which, he became convinced, pointed to a period other than that of Zechariah.[35] Since the days of Mede, and especially since the publication of Fluegge's treatise

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[32] 7. 1-7; 8. 18, 19.

[33] 8. 20-23.

[34] It is not improbable that the substance of the prophecies delivered by Zechariah was written down by the prophet himself; but if so, the original summary was worked over by a later editor (see C. Steuernagel, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, pp. 642, 643).

[35] His words are: "There is no scripture saith they (chapters 9-11) are Zachary's, but there is scripture saith they are Jeremy's as this of the evangelists." And again: "Certainly, if a man weighs the contents of some of them, they should in likelihood be of an elder date than the time of Zachary, namely, before the captivity, for the subjects of some of them were scarce in being after that time." The earliest followers of Mede applied his conclusion also to chapters 12 to 14.

on Zechariah,[36] in 1784, the question of the unity of the book of Zechariah has received, perhaps, as much attention as any problem of Old Testament criticism.[37] Modern scholarship tends more and more toward denying the last six chapters of the book to the sixth century Zechariah, and even cautious and otherwise exceedingly conservative scholars like von Orelli and Kirkpatrick have felt constrained to give up the unity of the book.[38] Within recent years there has, indeed, been only one elaborate attempt to defend the unity of the book, namely, by Professor Robinson in the dissertation to which reference has been made.[39] An exhaustive discussion of the entire subject would require more space than can be given to it in a work of this kind; hence all that the present writer can expect to do is to point out the lines along which the investigation must proceed and the most

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[36] *Die Weissagungen welche bey den Schriften des Propheten Sacharjas beygebogen sind.* Prior to this time Mede's suggestion had been adopted, in 1700, by Bishop Kidder, who extended the former's conclusions to include chapters 12 to 14, and, in 1722, by William Whiston.

[37] G. L. Robinson enumerates one hundred and three authors who, since the days of Mede, have treated the subject in one or more publications (*American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XII, pp. 2ff., article "The Prophecies of Zechariah"). According to his classification, thirty-six of these "defend" the unity of the book. In some cases the defense is by no means enthusiastic; J. J. S. Perowne, for instance, classed among the defenders, is content with saying: "Indeed, it is not easy to say which way the weight of evidence preponderates."

[38] "It seems in the highest degree improbable that these chapters can be the work of Zechariah, the coadjutor of Zerubbabel and Joshua in their great work of rebuilding the Temple" (A. F. Kirkpatrick, *Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 443).

[39] Other scholars, of course, hold the same view, but no one else has treated the subject so exhaustively. Another conservative discussion of importance is found in C. H. H. Wright's Bampton Lectures on Zechariah.

probable results to which the inquiry seems to lead.[40] The evidence to be considered is threefold—linguistic, historical, and theological:

1. **Linguistic Characteristics.** It has been pointed out again and again that between the two sections there are marked differences in diction, style and other features of composition. (1) With reference to the general style the justice of Eichhorn's remark is recognized by all. "The manner of writing in the second portion," says he, "is far loftier and more mysterious, the images employed grander and more magnificent." Rosenmueller calls the style of the first eight chapters "prosaic, feeble, poor"; that of the remaining six chapters "poetic, weighty, concise, flowing." (2) Attention has been called to the preference, in one or the other section, for certain words and phrases—for example, in chapters 1 to 8, "thus saith Yahweh," "the word of Yahweh came unto me," the parenthetic "oracle of Yahweh"; in chapters 9 to 14, "in that day," and many more.[41] (3) The headings indicating author and date, found in the first part, are wanting in the second part. (4) The figures and imagery of the one differ from those of the other. The first part abounds in visions with imagery mysterious enough to require an interpreter; the second part has no visions, but in chapter 11 introduces two allegories. It has the

[40] The most exhaustive discussion may be found in the dissertation of G. L. Robinson, "The Prophecies of Zechariah," in *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XII, pp. 2ff.; a very full discussion, with numerous references to earlier writers is given by H. G. Mitchell, *Zechariah*, pp. 232-259; for briefer discussions see Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, article, "Zechariah," or any modern Introduction.

[41] A longer list, though by no means complete, is given by Mitchell, *Zechariah*, p. 236. A much more extensive discussion is found in R. Eckardt, "Der Sprachgebrauch von Zach. 9-14." in *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1893, pp. 104ff.

images of the shepherd and the sheep, of Yahweh as the captain of his people, of the use of the people as weapons, and others.

It must be admitted that some of these arguments are not altogether conclusive: (1) Over against the lists of words and phrases which are thought to point to diversity of authorship long lists of words and phrases thought to favor unity of authorship have been presented. (2) By itself the absence of careful headings in the second part proves nothing. (3) The occurrence of visions and the use of certain imagery in one part of the book, while in the other part visions are absent and different imagery is used, cannot be considered conclusive against the unity of the book. Moreover, in an attempt to prove unity of authorship, Professor Robinson has pointed out that both parts contain specimens of clumsy diction, of repetition of the same words, of the use of phrases—not the same in both parts—unused by other writers, of the frequent use of vocatives, and of variableness of spelling. Of course, arguments based on such similarities prove either too much or nothing at all; for, as Cheyne says, "by such a method it would be easy to prove that the whole of the Old Testament had but one author." Nevertheless there can be no doubt that each section is marked by some striking linguistic and stylistic peculiarities.

Similarities and resemblances in language and style may easily be explained, but when different parts of one and the same book show marked differences the question inevitably arises whether such differences can be harmonized with unity of authorship. However we may explain the resemblances in the language of the two parts —and they can all be explained by the fact that both sections belong to the same general stage in the history of

the Hebrew language—the question still remains whether the differences in language and style which remain after all due allowance has been made for difference in subject matter can be harmonized with the theory that the entire book comes from the sixth-century Zechariah. To the present writer it seems that, even admitting as a general principle that style and diction by themselves are unsafe criteria for determining the date of a writing, in the present case the two parts differ so widely in the broad and general linguistic features that it is exceedingly difficult to believe that they were written by one and the same author.

2. Historical Statements and Allusions. The historical situation described and presupposed in chapters 9 to 14 is not that of chapters 1 to 8. The prophecies in the early part of the book have an intimate connection with events in the days of Darius. They meet the needs of a well-defined historical situation: the Jews are encouraged to rebuild the Temple and the city, and as a reward are promised speedy deliverance from their present distress and success and prosperity for the immediate future. But are the pictures of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, in chapters 12 and 14, and of the other calamities which are to befall the nation prior to the final triumph, adapted to the needs of the same community and the same age? And what is true of these two chapters is equally true of other portions of chapters 9 to 14.[42] In other words, the messages throughout

[42] This is not, as has been charged, a denial of prediction in chapters 9 to 14, for whenever the words may have been written, the writer looks forward to the final consummation of the kingdom of God; but prophecies whose dates are beyond question clearly show that the prophets always connected the future with their own present, and that their messages were intended primarily for their day and generation.

the second part presuppose an historical situation in Judah other than that presupposed in chapters 1 to 8; and this remains true, though it may be impossible to determine the exact period into which the chapters fit. What is true of conditions within the Jewish community is in the same degree true of conditions throughout the eastern world. "Zech. 1 to 8 pictures the whole earth at peace, which was true at least of all Syria; they portend no danger to Jerusalem from the heathen, but describe her peace and fruitful expansion in terms most suitable to the circumstances imposed upon her by the solid and clement policy of the earlier Persian kings. This is all changed in 9 to 14. The nations are restless; a siege of Jerusalem is imminent, and her salvation is to be assured only by much war and a terrible shedding of blood. We know exactly how Israel fared and felt in the early sections of the Persian period; her interest in the politics of the world, her feelings toward her governors, and her whole attitude to the heathen were not at that time those which are reflected in Zech. 9 to 14."[43] True, Professor Robinson has attempted to prove that these chapters had their origin between 518 and 516, but his arguments are not convincing. Most writers who favor the unity of the book are content with showing that the historical situation presupposed is that of the period after the exile, which, however, is far from proving that it fits the period of Zechariah.

3. **Theological Ideas Expressed and Implied.** Robinson devotes an entire section of his dissertation to the task of demonstrating similarity in fundamental ideas between the two parts. Perhaps the easiest way of revealing the weakness of his position is to give a brief

[43] G. A. Smith, *The Minor Prophets*, II, pp. 459, 460.

outline of his argument: (1) An unusually deep spiritual tone pervades the entire book. (2) There is a similar attitude of hope and expectation in both parts: (*a*) The whole nation is expected to return; (*b*) Jerusalem shall be inhabited; (*c*) The Temple shall be built, and become the center of the nation's religious life;[44] (*d*) the Messianic hope is peculiarly strong in both parts; (*e*) peace and prosperity are expected; (*f*) God's providence is represented as extending over the whole earth. (3) The prophet's attitude toward the nations, the enemies of the theocracy, is the same in both parts.

That there are resemblances between the two parts is not and need not be denied, but do the similarities enumerated prove anything? If they prove that the two parts come from one and the same author, it becomes a very simple matter to prove, by the same line of reasoning, that the same author wrote a number of other prophetic books. Vague and general resemblances in ideas, such as may be found between the two parts, can be noted between other prophetic writings coming certainly from different authors, and yet who would claim in these cases that they prove common authorship? Again the real question is whether the differences in ideas can be harmonized with belief in unity of authorship. Such differences are discovered as soon as one goes beyond the general thought and attempts a comparison of details. For instance, in chapters 9 to 14 there is not the slightest concern for the rebuilding of the Temple, while in chapters 1 to 8 the sublimest hopes center around the completion of Yahweh's sanctuary. Again, while the

[44] Under this head Robinson gives as references from the second part 9. 8; 14. 20, 21. Do these verses contain anything that could possibly be construed as a promise of the rebuilding of the Temple?

Messianic hope is strongly developed in both parts, there are marked differences between the Messianic ideas and ideals of 1 to 8 and those of 9 to 14.[45] Moreover, alongside of a few general similarities in the hopes for the future of the Jewish community may be seen striking differences in detail.[46] Equally noteworthy is the silence in chapters 12 to 14 concerning a return from exile.[47] As in all investigations of this character, a mathematical demonstration may not be possible, but the facts enumerated make it, to say the least, highly probable, if not practically certain, that chapters 9 to 14 do not come from Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo.

Unity of Chapters 9 to 14. Even within chapters 9 to 14 the question of unity has been raised. Nowack, for example, finds no less than four originally independent pieces;[48] so also Mitchell;[49] but most commentators, who doubt the unity of the six chapters distinguish only two independent portions, (1) chapters 9 to 11 + 13. 7-9; (2) 12. 1 to 13. 6 + 14. 1-21. That some differences exist between these two portions is admitted even by those who believe that both come from one and the same author. The more important of these differences are as follows: (1) Chapters 9 to 11 speak of a return from exile;[50] chapters 12 to 14 are silent concerning it; (2)

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[45] Compare, for instance, 3. 8; 6. 12, 13, with 9. 9, 10 and chapter 8 with chapter 14.

[46] Compare 1. 21; 2. 8-11; 8. 7, 8, with 12. 2ff.

[47] Compare 2. 6ff. Other differences are brought out in the section dealing with the Teaching of the book; see below, pp. 587–591.

[48] (1) Chapter 9 (10. 1, 2), 10. 3 to 11. 3; (2) 11. 4-17 + 13. 7-9; (3) 12. 1 to 13. 6; (4) chapter 14 (*Die Kleinen Propheten*, pp. 346-350).

[49] (1) 9. 1-10; (2) 9. 11 to 11. 3; (3) 11. 4-17 + 13. 7-9; (4) 12. 1-13; chapter 14 (*Zechariah*, pp. 258, 259).

[50] For instance, 10. 8, 9.

the first part speaks of a Messianic king;[51] in the second Yahweh himself is king;[52] (3) in the first part the picture of the future is comparatively simple; in the second it is "highly imaginative and obscure"; (4) in the first part the horse is to be cut off from Jerusalem;[53] in the second it is retained;[54] (5) Ephraim and Joseph are common names in the first part;[55] they are not found at all in chapters 12 to 14. On the other hand, it may be pointed out that the two sections speak in the same manner of idolatry, of the nations, their punishment and conversion, and that language and style favor unity of authorship. That one author is responsible for the whole section is the opinion of Stade, based upon a most thorough investigation of the question.[56] On the other hand, cautious and conservative scholars like Driver and Kirkpatrick are inclined to recognize two sources.[57] The data are much less numerous and decisive than they are in the case of chapters 1 to 8 and 9 to 14, and with our present knowledge or lack of knowledge it may be best to leave the unity of the second part of the book an open question, though to the present writer the internal evidence in

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[51] 9. 9, 10

[52] 14. 16.

[53] 9. 10.

[54] 14. 20.

[55] Chapter 10.

[56] *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1881, pp. 1ff.; 1882, 151ff.; 275ff. Cheyne, also after careful investigation, writes: "With perhaps one or two exceptions, chapters 9 to 11 and 12 to 14 are so closely welded together that even analysis is impossible." With these conclusions agree also Wellhausen, Cornill, Marti, and several other scholars who ordinarily show no predisposition for conservative views.

[57] S. R. Driver, *Introduction*, pp. 348ff.; A. F. Kirkpatrick, *Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 443ff.; so numerous other scholars, some, as has been pointed out, recognizing as many as four sources.

favor of diversity of authorship appears to be stronger than that favoring unity.

Date of Chapters 9 to 14. If chapters 9 to 14 do not come from the sixth-century Zechariah, is it possible to determine their date? In the investigation of this point we find ourselves face to face with evidence that seems to point in different directions; consequently, some scholars favor a preexilic,[58] others, among them practically all the more recent writers, a postexilic date. The defenders of a preexilic date, with few exceptions, insist that chapters 9 to 14 contain two separate oracles, coming from two authors, living at different periods. The first oracle, chapters 9 to 11, is commonly assigned to the latter part of the eighth century;[59] chapters 12 to 14, chiefly on account of 12. 11, to the years between the death of Josiah and the fall of Jerusalem, that is, between 608 and 586 B. C.

1. *Date of Chapters 9 to 11.* Since the two parts, chapters 9 to 11 and 12 to 14 present marked differences, and since many scholars are inclined to assign them to different dates, it may be advisable to consider the dates of the two parts separately. The evidence advanced in favor of a preexilic date for 9 to 11 may be summarized as follows: (1) The kingdoms of Judah and Israel, or Ephraim, are still standing.[60] (2) A partial exile of the northern kingdom is implied.[61] If a complete exile were implied, a date subsequent to the fall of Samaria, in 722/721 would have to be assumed; but, as has been

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[58] Some recognize a postexilic redaction and postexilic additions.

[59] The suggestion has been made that the Zechariah named in Isa. 8. 2 may be the author.

[60] 9. 10, 13; 10. 6.

[61] 10. 6, 8-10.

stated, other passages suggest that the northern kingdom is still standing. Moreover, the mention of Gilead, in 10. 10, makes it probable that the districts east of the Jordan had recently passed through severe suffering; which points to a date after 734, when Galilee and Gilead were devastated by Tiglath-pileser IV.[62] (3) Both Egypt and Assyria are still powerful empires;[63] the arrogance of Assyria is at its height.[64] (4) The prophet expects the avenger to come from the northeast, destroying in order Syria, Phœnicia, Philistia,[65] which is the road Sennacherib took in 702/701 B. C.[66] (5) The prophecy implies that there is danger of a rupture between Israel and Judah.[67] (6) The threat against Damascus is appropriate in the eighth century.[68] (7) The expression "flock of slaughter,"[69] the vivid picture of oppression[70] and of the cutting off of three shepherds in one month,[71] reflect the state of anarchy and foreign entanglements following the death of Jeroboam II.[72] (8) Idolatry and soothsaying are widespread.[73] (9)

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[62] 2 Kings 15. 29.

[63] 10. 9-11.

[64] 10. 11.

[65] 9. 1-7.

[66] *Taylor Cylinder*, II, 34ff.; R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, pp. 340ff.

[67] 11. 14; compare 2 Kings 16. 5, 6.

[68] Compare 2 Kings 16. 9.

[69] 11. 4.

[70] 11. 5.

[71] 11. 8.

[72] See above, p. 369. Two of the shepherds are thought to be Zechariah and Shallum (2 Kings 15. 8-15). To account for the third it is said that during a period of such anarchy a third rival king may easily have arisen; his name may have been omitted in Kings because he was quickly put out of the way.

[73] 10. 2; compare Isa. 2. 6-8.

The picture of the Messianic king resembles the descriptions of the eighth-century prophets.[74] (10) The style and vivid imagery have their counterparts in Hosea. (11) The chapters reveal other similarities with the eighth-century prophets.[75]

Are these arguments conclusive? A closer study soon reveals the fact that several of them have little or no weight. For instance, (8) loses all its force in view of Mal. 3. 8;[76] (9) must be set aside, for the picture of the Messianic king is not identical with those of the eighth century; on the contrary, it contains features foreign to that age; besides, 9. 9 reads as if the "daughter of Zion" had no king at the time the words were uttered. The resemblances enumerated under (10) and (11) may be explained on the assumption that the author of chapters 9 to 11 was acquainted with the utterances of the eighth-century prophets. Argument (7) also is without much force. The first two passages relied upon may be taken as descriptions of the troubled conditions in postexilic times which are portrayed also in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah; the third passage cannot be fitted into the eighth century without importing a ruler of whom no hint is given anywhere in the Old Testament. Argument (5) does not necessarily point to the preexilic period. If the staff "Bands" signifies, not a united nation, but, as is more probable, a promise of reunion,[77] the prophecy fits equally well into the postexilic period; for the expectation of a reunion of north and south is a

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[74] Compare 9. 9, 10 with Isa. 9. 6, 7 and Mic. 5. 2-5a.

[75] 9. 10; 10. 4, 5 are compared with Mic. 5. 5-11 and Isa. 9. 6, 7; 9. 1-7 with Amos 1. 3ff.; 10. 10 with Mic. 7. 12, 13.

[76] Compare also Josephus, *Antiquities* VIII, 2, 5.

[77] See comment on 11. 14 in F. C. Eiselen, *Minor Prophets*, p. 666.

common feature of postexilic prophecy.[78] Thus interpreted, 11. 14 would refer to the destruction of the hope of a final complete union between north and south, which was an essential condition of ultimate triumph. Again, (2) does not *prove* a preexilic date; at the most, it permits it. The statements receive a much more natural interpretation if applied to the exiles of both north and south. Do 9. 10, 13 and 10. 6 really prove that the kingdoms of Israel and Judah are in existence? (1) In 9. 10 the prophet speaks of the Messianic age. The restoration of both kingdoms in connection with the dawn of the Messianic era is expected by all the prophets; and all that the prophet assumes in the references given is the completion of the restoration, to which he looks forward with yearning assurance.[79] This leaves three closely related arguments, namely, (3), (4), and (6). The occurrence of the name "Assyria" does not prove the existence of Assyria as a world power; for the name is used of Babylon,[80] Persia,[81] and, at a later time, of Syria.[82] Egypt may have been named as the typical oppressor of Israel,[83] or the reference may be to the Egypt of the Ptolemies. True, Syria, Phœnicia, and Philistia are con-

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[78] For instance, 8. 13.

[79] Surely, there is no reason for doubting that in the several returns, beginning with 537 B. C., many descendants of northern families returned to Palestine.

[80] Lam. 5. 6.

[81] Ezra 6. 22.

[82] Evidently, the power of Assyria made such deep and permanent impression that even long after the fall of the empire the name was retained as a designation of its powerful successors. With this usage may be compared the expression "land of Omri" or "house of Omri," found as a designation of Israel in Assyrian inscriptions long after the death of Omri himself.

[83] Compare Joel 3. 19.

demned by Amos because of their cruelties;[84] however, it is noteworthy that in 9. 1-7 these nations are not spoken of as *present* enemies of Judah; but even if they were mentioned as such, the possibility of a postexilic date would not be excluded. The Philistines continued their hostility down to the Maccabean period, Phœnicia is denounced by Ezekiel, and there is good reason for supposing that the passage we are discussing is dependent on Ezek. 28. 1-5; Hadrach, Hamath, and Damascus might be mentioned in postexilic times as well as in the eighth century B. C.

Over against these arguments, which are seen to be entirely inadequate to prove a preexilic date, may be placed several considerations in favor of a postexilic origin: (1) A natural interpretation of 9. 11ff. and 10. 3ff. makes it certain that not only a partial or complete exile of the northern kingdom, but of Judah as well, is presupposed. (2) Whenever the older prophets announce judgment upon the nations they are careful to state the causes of the judgment. This is not done in the postexilic writings, because their wrong doings throughout the centuries, culminating in the desecration and destruction of the holy city, are well known, and all the people recognize that the nations deserve the severest retribution.[85] (3) The hostility toward Philistia,[86] especially the curse pronounced upon Ashdod,[87] is more intelligible in postexilic days.[88] It was during the exile that the Edomites began to press westward and to threaten the Philistian territory. (4) The mention of the "sons of Greece"[89] points to a postexilic date. The expression it-

[84] Amos 1. 3-10.
[85] Compare 9. 1-7.
[86] 9. 5-7.
[87] Verse 6.
[88] Compare Neh. 4. 7; 13. 24.
[89] 9. 13.

self, it is true, might have been used in preexilic times;[90] but in this passage Greece is thought of as a world power, which it did not become until a relatively late period. (5) While the dependence of this section upon other Old Testament writings has been exaggerated, especially by Stade, it is highly probable that in some cases the dependence is real,[91] and while in the case of two similar passages it is always difficult to determine which is the original, in this instance those who have given the subject the most thorough consideration are firmly convinced that Zechariah is the borrower.[92]

All the points which are but briefly covered in the preceding paragraphs are discussed at length by Robinson, who reaches the conclusion, which to the present writer appears well founded, that every passage quoted in favor of an early date receives an equally satisfactory, or even more satisfactory, explanation when assigned to a postexilic date. On the other hand, some of the evidence pointing to a postexilic date, especially the considerations mentioned under (1), (4), (5), receives no natural interpretation on the assumption of a preexilic date. We may conclude, therefore, that chapters 9 to 11 were written in the postexilic period by a prophet who

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[90] The name *Yāwān*, "Greece," occurs on the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, about 1400 B. C.

[91] Compare, for example, 9. 1-8 with Ezek. 28. 1-5; chapter 11 with Ezek. 34 and Jer. 25. 34-38; 10. 3-12 with Hos. 2. This list might be enlarged, but the references given are sufficient to show a close connection in thought and, sometimes, in form of expression, with other Old Testament writings.

[92] To DeWette the evidence in favor of the dependence of chapters 9 to 14 on Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets proved so convincing, that, after defending a preexilic date for many years, he found himself compelled, on this ground alone, to change his view and insist on a postexilic date for the chapters.

was thoroughly familiar with the more ancient sacred writings of his people and who may have availed himself, to a considerable extent, of preexilic material.

2. *Date of Chapters 12 to 14.* As has been stated, the defenders of a preexilic date for these chapters almost universally assign them to the years between 608 and 586 B. C. In favor of this date the following reasons are advanced: (1) The earthquake in Uzziah's reign appears to be fresh in the memories of the people.[93] (2) The same is true of the death of Josiah.[94] (3) Hostility of Egypt against Judah is presupposed in 14. 18, which fits the reigns of Josiah and Jehoahaz.[95] (4) 12. 10 is best explained as a reference to the persecutions during Manasseh's reign.[96] (5) According to 13. 2-6 idolatry and false prophecy are prevalent.[97] (6) The northern kingdom has disappeared; all interest is centered in Jerusalem.[98] (7) The references to the "house of David"[99] indicate that the kingdom of Judah is still in existence. (8) The predictions of the siege and doom of Jerusalem[100] are best explained as pointing to the impending destruction of the city by the Chaldeans.

Again it must be said that the arguments advanced fail to establish the claims made by the defenders of a preexilic date: (1) If the prophecy is dated after 608 B. C., the earthquake occurred about a century and a

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[93] 14. 5.

[94] 12. 11.

[95] 2 Kings 23. 28-30, 33.

[96] 2 Kings 21.

[97] Compare Jer. 23. 9ff.

[98] Attention is also called to the fact that in 14. 10 Geba is mentioned as the northern boundary of Judah (compare 2 Kings 23. 8).

[99] 12. 7, 8, 10, 12.

[100] 12. 2ff.; 14. 2ff.

half earlier, which excludes personal reminiscence; but if the earthquake was terrible enough to leave a vivid impression for one hundred and fifty years, it may well have been remembered for many years more. (2) The meaning of 12. 11 is uncertain, but even if the passage refers to the mourning for Josiah it does not prove a preexilic date. The tragic death of the reformer king was commemorated for centuries, as is shown by 2 Chron. 35. 25, which gives a description of a public mourning for the king, and states distinctly that the custom was continued "unto this day," that is, the day of the Chronicler, about 300 B. C. (3) 14. 18 neither says nor implies anything concerning the hostility of Egypt; the latter is singled out for an entirely different reason.[101] (4) It is mere assumption to connect 12. 10 with the persecution under Manasseh or with the murder of Uriah by Jehoiakim.[102] It is much more natural to connect it with the events described in 11. 9ff. (5) False prophecy was not unknown in the postexilic period.[103] (6) True, there is no reference to the northern kingdom, but this silence proves only that the northern kingdom had already disappeared, which is equally true of the postexilic period. On the other hand, the mention of

[101] Egypt is singled out because of the peculiar condition of its climate. It is not dependent directly on rain for fertility, but on the overflowing of the Nile, due to heavy rainfall in the regions south of Egypt proper. The threat of verse 18, therefore, would have no special terror for Egypt, and some might draw the conclusion that Egypt might refuse to worship Yahweh. Not so, says the prophet; Egypt also must respond or suffer severe punishment.

[102] Jer. 26. 20ff.

[103] Neh. 6. 10ff.; Isa. 65. 1ff. Note also the explanation suggested by several scholars: "The prediction of the final extirpation of idolatry appears to be a repetition of Hosea's prediction (2. 17) and does not necessarily imply the prevalence of idolatry."

Judah does not necessarily prove the existence of the southern kingdom, for, as is clearly shown by chapters 1 to 8, the postexilic community is commonly called Judah. (7) While the "house of David" is mentioned there is no reference to a king; and 1 Chron. 3. 17-24; Ezra 8. 2 prove that as late as the time of the Chronicler, about 300 B. C., the descendants of David were reckoned as a distinct family. Moreover, the manner in which the "house of Levi" is coordinated with the "house of David"[104] points to the postexilic period, when, for the first time, the civil and ecclesiatical rulers possessed equal authority. (8) The predictions in chapters 12 and 14 are more in accord with the apocalyptic pictures of Joel and Daniel, both late postexilic writings, than with any announcements of the fall of Jerusalem found in Jeremiah or other preexilic writings.

It is seen, then, that all the passages quoted as proving a preexilic date can be explained equally well as coming from the postexilic period; indeed, some of them receive a much more natural interpretation if the later origin is assumed. In addition, the chapters reveal some features that strongly favor the later origin: (1) The prominence given to the priestly family of Levi;[105] (2) the prominent place assigned to the feast of tabernacles;[106] (3) the dependence upon earlier prophecies;[107] (4) the apocalyptic character of the entire section. The evidence may not be as extensive and decisive as in the case of chapters 9 to 11, but it is sufficiently definite to

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[104] 12. 12ff.

[105] 12. 12, 13.

[106] 14. 16.

[107] Compare, for instance, chapters 12 and 14 with Ezek. 38 and 39; 14. 8-11 with Ezek. 47. 1-12; 12. 1 with Isa. 51. 13.

make it more than probable that chapters 12 to 14 also are of a postexilic date.

Can the exact date or dates of chapters 9 to 14 be determined? Kirkpatrick is content with saying: "In so difficult a question it is necessary to speak with hesitation; but at present it seems to me that these chapters belong to the same class of apocalyptic eschatological prophecy as Isa. 24 to 27, and may with considerable probability be assigned to the same period, the first sixty or seventy years after the return."[108] Wellhausen dates chapters 9 to 11 + 13. 7-9 in the first part of the second century, chapters 12 to 14, in the "Maccabean period," which means, a little later.[109] Nowack, who divides the section into four independent parts, assigns 9. 1 to 11. 3[110] to the period "subsequent to Alexander the Great"; of 11. 4-17 + 13. 7-9 he says: "This alone may be regarded as beyond doubt, that we are directed to a time after the exile"; though he also refers favorably to Wellhausen's suggestion that the passage may reflect the incidents of the last decade preceding the Maccabean uprising. Of 12. 1 to 13. 6 and chapter 14 he is unwilling to say more than that they belong to the later postexilic times, chapter 14 after Malachi.[111] Marti, who defends unity of authorship, thinks that the entire section, with the possible exception of 10. 1, 2, originated in the year 160 B. C.[112] Mitchell, who agrees with Nowack in distinguishing four parts,[113] writes: "The

[108] *Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 445. The date suggested for Isa. 24 to 27 is too early (see vol. I, p. 173).

[109] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, pp. 195, 198.

[110] With the exception of 10. 1, 2.

[111] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, pp. 350-354.

[112] *Das Dodekapropheton*, p. 397.

[113] His divisions, however, are not the same as Nowack's.

introductory verses[114] are a distinct prophecy written soon after the battle of Issus.[115] This was made the text for a more extended utterance[116] which dates from the reign of Ptolemy III.[117] A third writer, soon after the battle of Raphia,[118] supplemented this combined work by a pessimistic picture[119] of the situation as he saw it. About the same time a fourth writer with apocalyptic tendencies undertook to present the whole subject in a more optimistic light, the result being 12. 1 to 13. 6 and chapter 14."[120]

The divergence of opinion is due, in part, to our ignorance concerning conditions in Judah during the post-exilic period, in part, to the indefiniteness of the data supplied by the chapters themselves. There is, indeed, only one reference that can be taken as a starting point. Joel, about 400 B. C., names the Greeks as a distant nation;[121] in Zech. 9. 13[122] they appear as a foe with whom Judah may come in conflict at any moment. This would fit the period immediately preceding the Palestinian campaign of Alexander in 332 B. C. It has been suggested, however, that "Greece" in this passage may mean the Syrian kingdom of the Seleucidæ, formed some years after the death of Alexander, and that the reference may be to the struggles between Judah and the Seleucidæ,

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[114] 9. 1-10.
[115] 333 B. C
[116] 9. 11 to 11. 3.
[117] 247-222 B. C.
[118] 217 B. C.
[119] 11. 4-17, 13. 7-9.
[120] *Zechariah*, pp. 258, 259.
[121] Joel 3. 6.
[122] There is insufficient reason for regarding the words, "thy sons, O Greece," a later interpolation.

early in the second century B. C., which finally led to the Maccabean uprisings. With this identification "Assyria" would be another name for the same power, while Egypt would be the kingdom of the Ptolemies; Damascus, Hadrach, and Hamath[123] would be mentioned as important cities of the Seleucid kingdom; the three shepherds[124] might be identified with three leaders of the foreign armies, cut off in these struggles, or, if the prophecy is brought down late enough, with three high priests,[125] cut off in the troublous days of the Maccabean uprisings. On the basis of 9. 13 we may be justified in assigning at least chapters 9 to 11 to a date not earlier than 350, perhaps to the days immediately following the battle of Issus in 333 B. C.[126] If chapters 12 to 14 come from the same author, they must come from the same period; if they are assigned to a different author, their date must remain uncertain, for the data in these three chapters are even less decisive than in the case of chapters 9 to 11; but the more fully developed apocalyptic and eschatological features point to a time certainly not earlier than that suggested for 9 to 11, and, possibly, about a century later.

Literary History of Chapters 9 to 14. If chapters 9 to 14 do not come from the author of chapters 1 to 8, how is it that at present they form a part of the book of Zechariah? It must be admitted that to this question no

[123] 9. 1, 2.

[124] 11. 8.

[125] Marti thinks of Lysimachus, Jason, and Menelaus.

[126] To bring the chapters down to 160 B. C. would make it difficult to account for their position in the prophetic canon, which seems to have been completed in the days of Jesus ben Sirach, about 180 B. C. It would also seem strange to have one and the same power referred to both as Assyria and as Greece, and nowhere under its own name.

entirely satisfactory answer has been found;[127] but the following explanation, which is widely accepted, has much in its favor: From the fact that Zech. 9 to 11, Zech. 12 to 14, and Mal. 1 to 4 have similar titles[128] the inference may be drawn that the three sections came into the hands of the collector or collectors of the Minor Prophets as three separate anonymous writings. As such he naturally placed them at the end of the collection, and in doing so prefixed to Zech. 12. 1 and Mal. 1. 1 titles similar to the one he found prefixed to Zech. 9. 1.[129] The "messenger" of Mal. 3. 1 the collector identified with the author of the book and, understanding the Hebrew equivalent as a proper noun,[130] the name of the author, he incorporated it in the title. As a result Malachi came to be regarded as a separate book; the two remaining pieces, still anonymous, in the course of time came to be accepted as integral parts of the preceding book whose author was given.

The Prophet and His Times. The prophet Zechariah is called, in 1. 1, "the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo;" in Ezra 5. 1 and 6. 14, "the son of Iddo."[131] According

[127] Mitchell closes his discussion with these words: "It is possible that 9. 1-10 was originally an appendix to chapters 1 to 8, and that the rest were added in their order. Since, however, there is no clear reference in any of them to chapters 1 to 8, it seems safer to suppose that no part of the last six chapters was added to the book of Zechariah until they had all been written" (*Zechariah*, p. 259).

[128] Compare 9. 1; 12. 1; Mal. 1. 1.

[129] Perhaps it is better to assume that he originated all three titles.

[130] Hebrew, *Maleākhī*, equivalent to the English name "Malachi."

[131] Various attempts have been made to remove the discrepancy: (1) It is suggested that Berechiah may have died young or at least may never have come to prominence, and that, therefore, the name of the better-known grandfather came to be attached to that of the prophet. That a man should be called the "son" of his grandfather is explained by the loose use of the term among Semitic peoples (compare Gen.

to Neh. 12. 4 Iddo was the chief of one of the priestly families that returned from exile with Zerubbabel and Joshua. In the Ezra passages it is stated that Zechariah, in cooperation with Haggai, was instrumental in reviving interest in the rebuilding of the Temple.[132] In Neh. 12. 16 a Zechariah is named among the priests under Joiakim, the son of Joshua; if this Zechariah is identical with our prophet, the latter was not only of priestly descent but, like Ezekiel, actually combined the priestly and the prophetic offices.

For other information concerning the prophet's life we are entirely dependent upon the book bearing his name. According to 1. 1 his activity began in the eighth month in the second year of Darius, that is, about two months after Haggai began his ministry. The last date mentioned[133] is the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius. In other words, the recorded public ministry of Zechariah covered only about two years, from November 520 to December 518 B. C. In all probability the prophet was a comparatively young

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29. 5 with 24. 24; Ezra 7. 1 with 1 Chron. 6. 14, 15). (2) Some have suggested that Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, was the author of Zech. 9 to 14, Zechariah, the son of Iddo, the author of chapters 1 to 8; and that a later redactor considering the two as one and the same author, combined the two works and the two titles. (3) A still different view assumes that a copyist, when copying the title "Zechariah, the son of Iddo," was reminded of Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah named in Isa. 8. 2, and that, erroneously identifying the contemporary of Isaiah with the postexilic prophet, he inserted "son of Jeberechiah" in this place, which later became corrupted to "son of Berechiah." Whatever the explanation of the present title may be, Zechariah may be regarded as the son of Iddo.

[132] The Ezra passages are probably based on the information furnished in the books of Haggai and Zechariah.

[133] 7. 1.

man[134] when he returned to Jerusalem and his influence continued for many years subsequent to 518 B. C.[135] Of his later life nothing is known. Tradition states that he lived to a ripe old age, died a natural death in Jerusalem,[136] and was buried by the side of Haggai; but these and other traditions and legends that have grown up around the name of Zechariah are of little or no historical value.

Conditions reflected in chapters 1 to 8 are identical with those forming the background of Haggai's message and activity.[137] They called for a prophet with a living faith and moral earnestness. The lofty anticipations of the exilic and preexilic prophets had not been realized, the foreign oppressor was still strong and powerful while the Jews were poor and feeble; as a result, the first hopeful enthusiasm of the returned exiles had been displaced by despondency and gloom.[138]

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[134] The Christian traditions to which reference is made in connection with Haggai (see above, p. 550) suggest that when Zechariah came from Babylon he was already well advanced in years and had given proof of his prophetic qualifications by various predictions and the performance of miracles.

[135] That Zechariah was younger than Haggai may be inferred from the following: (1) Everywhere he is named after Haggai, (2) he began his public ministry later than Haggai, and (3) he continued for at least two years more. If Neh. 12. 16 refers to our prophet, this passage also implies that he continued to be prominent long after 518.

[136] One recension of Epiphanius, erroneously identifying the prophet with Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, whose martyrdom is recorded in 2 Chron. 24. 20ff., states that the prophet was put to death by Joash, king of Judah.

[137] See above, pp. 546–550, and pp. 559, 560.

[138] In view of the uncertainty as to dates nothing can be added to what is stated above, on pp. 564, 565, regarding the historical background of chapters 9 to 14. For an attempt to give a more detailed description see Mitchell, *Zechariah*, pp. 251-257.

Teaching. For the sake of convenience and clearness the two divisions, chapters 1 to 8 and chapters 9 to 14 respectively, may be considered separately.

1. *Chapters 1 to 8.* (1) Zechariah differs from the great prophets who preceded him in three points: *a.* The emphasis on visions as a means of divine communication; *b.* the apocalyptic symbolism entering into the visions; *c.* the large place angelic mediation occupies in his intercourse with Yahweh. The first two concern chiefly the form of revelation; only the third may be considered as affecting the prophet's teaching. In the account of the visions appear in embryo some of the ideas which are found in more developed stages of development in the intertestamental and the New Testament angelology. Closely connected with the increasing emphasis on angels is the tendency, so widespread in later Judaism, to consider Yahweh too sacred for direct contact with men and to remove him so far away that direct communion with him came to be thought of as almost impossible. Even prophecy seems to have lost in a measure its sense of immediate communion with God; at any rate, the prophet is represented as receiving his instructions through an angel, who acts as intermediary, interpreter, and guide. Angels appear in the unfolding of the visions, they carry forward the events symbolized and are active participants in the working out of human history. A somewhat different phase of the same development may be seen in the figure of "the adversary" or "Satan," who appears for the first time in the vision of the trial and acquittal of the high priest Joshua.[139] With Zechariah the word is not yet a proper name; it becomes such only in 1 Chron.

[139] 3. 1-10.

21. 1; but it is not difficult to trace the thought development from the "adversary" in Zechariah[140] to the figure called by the same name and playing an important role in the prologue of the book of Job, to "Satan"—now a proper name—in 1 Chron. 21. 1, and to the "Satan" or "Devil" of the intertestamental and New Testament literature.

(2) The Temple occupies a unique place in the thought and teaching of Zechariah. From beginning to end, he, like Haggai, pleads for the rebuilding of the house of Yahweh, and his sublimest promises center around the completed Temple. The high regard for the Temple and the priesthood is not the outgrowth of low spiritual conceptions, but, rather, of a clear appreciation of the needs of the hour. The Jews had not yet reached the stage of religious development in which forms and symbols could be discarded; they still needed the Temple as a symbol of the presence of their God. Furthermore, in an age when religion was the only bond strong enough to unite the heterogeneous elements in the postexilic community, the Temple was needed as a common place of worship. It is exceedingly doubtful that without the Temple Jewish religion could have been preserved during the century following the return of 537 B. C.

(3) Of much interest are the Messianic hopes of Zechariah. The Temple plays a prominent part, but only as an earnest of better things to come; the high priest and his fellows receive honor, but only as a "sign" of one greater than they, namely, "Branch." It is around the person of this Branch that the hopes of Zechariah center. It is he who will complete the building of the

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[140] See margin of 3. 1.

Temple, have constant access to Yahweh, and reign in peace forever. The prophet identifies Branch with Zerubbabel;[141] in whose person, therefore, a descendant of David once more comes to the front as destined to occupy the royal throne in the kingdom of God. The blessings of the Messianic age will be both temporal[142] and spiritual;[143] they will be enjoyed primarily by the Jews, but not by them exclusively. True, some of the nations are destined to be "a spoil to those that served them," but the prophet is equally emphatic in his anticipation of the conversion of foreigners.[144]

(4) The accusation that Zechariah is the teacher of a heartless and unspiritual formalism is not well founded, for the prophet clearly and specifically teaches that forms and ceremonies are not essential elements of true religion;[145] he values them only as means by the use of which men may be led into purer and nobler lives. His conception of the ideal future includes the removal of sin from the land and the people.[146] People, city, land, all must be holy; not only in a ceremonial but in an ethical sense as well, if they are to enjoy the presence of Yahweh and become partakers of his blessings.

(5) Zechariah constantly emphasizes the truth that ultimate triumph is dependent on divine cooperation. The words, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Yahweh of hosts,"[147] refer primarily to the

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[141] Compare 3. 8 with 4. 7-10 with 6. 9-13.

[142] For example, 1. 17; 2. 4, 5.

[143] For example, 2. 10; 3. 9.

[144] For example, 2. 11; 8. 18-23.

[145] Compare chapters 7 and 8.

[146] This is the purpose of the three visions of the trial and acquittal of the high priest, the flying roll, and the woman in the ephah.

[147] 4. 6.

rebuilding of the Temple, but the same divine aid is needed in every other undertaking. It is only as Yahweh gives his support that the people can be restored to their own land, there to live in joy and felicity forever.

2. *Chapters 9 to 14.* The teaching of the second part of Zechariah differs materially from that of chapters 1 to 8. The angels disappear entirely; in chapters 1 to 8 the interest centers in the rebuilding of the Temple and the needs of the restored community during the latter part of the sixth century B. C., in chapters 9 to 14 the interest centers almost exclusively around events leading to the final consummation of the kingdom of God. Differences may be noted also in the Messianic ideas and ideals of the two sections,[148] and in the pictures of the nation's future.[149] The distinctive teaching of the six chapters may be summarized as follows:[150]

(1) The Messianic King. The person of the Messianic king appears only in 9. 9, 10, but there very distinctly. The low estimate placed by Nowack on the personality described in these verses is not warranted. "The Messianic king," says he, "still appears, it is true, in 9. 9f.,

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[148] Compare 3. 8 and 6. 12, 13 with 9. 9, 10; chapter 8 with chapter 14.

[149] Compare 1. 21; 2. 8-11; 8. 7, 8 with 12. 2ff.; 14. 1ff. The differences arise largely from the fact that while the prophecies in chapters 1 to 8 are closely connected with the conditions of the Jewish community during the reign of Darius, and aim to meet the needs of that day, the utterances in chapters 9 to 14 cut themselves loose from these conditions, and to a large extent from all present historical surroundings—though, of course, historical events from the background of the prophet's pictures—and deal almost exclusively with the consummation of the kingdom of God. The entire collection is essentially apocalyptic and eschatological.

[150] The outline followed is that of Kirkpatrick, though the present writer finds it necessary, in some cases, to reject his interpretation.

but he is a comparatively meaningless figure which might be left out without damaging the connection. He is no longer the leader in the conflict against enemies, but exclusively prince of peace, with an extremely passive character. The conception of the final king had at this time assumed a pale cast, that it might be able to take on other colors, namely, those of priest and prophet."[151] That the verses might be omitted without damaging the connection is true, but no more so than in the case of many other Messianic passages scattered throughout the Old Testament and, in fact, of hundreds of non-Messianic passages. The king is the prince of peace rather than a military leader, but that is true also in the Messianic classic in Isa. 9. 2-7, as well as in other Messianic passages of less importance. To say that the king assumes a "pale cast" fails to do justice to the vivid description which in some respects is in full accord with conceptions expressed in other prophetic books. However, two new features are introduced, (1) "having salvation," that is, the king will at all times enjoy the divine help and favor, so that all he undertakes will prosper, and (2) "lowly," that is, he will be of lowly estate and humble in spirit.

(2) The Rejected Shepherd. The passages demanding special consideration are 11. 4-14 and 11. 15-17 + 13. 7-9. In the former passage Yahweh is represented as commanding the prophet to take charge of his oppressed flock, to guard and protect it; but, finding himself thwarted in the carrying out of his gracious purpose, the prophet finally decides to abandon the flock. A foolish shepherd takes his place, who neglects and ill-treats

[151] *Die Kleinen Propheten*, p. 354.

the flock, but he is to be cut off by Yahweh.[152] What, then, is the teaching of this parable? Undoubtedly the prophet has in mind prophecies like Jer. 23. 1-8; Ezek. 34; 37. 24ff., which connect the raising up of the good shepherd with the Messianic era of the future. At the same time, it seems quite certain that the Zechariah passage does not point to the future, but describes Yahweh's dealings with Israel in the past; only 11. 17 + 13. 7-9 point to the future.[153] Evidently, the allegory contains a solemn warning that the divine care and grace may be frustrated by human obstinacy. It has been done again and again in the past, it has been done in the immediate past to which the prophecy points, and it may occur again, unless the prophet's contemporaries take heed. The promises in chapters 9 and 10 are glorious. Will they be realized? All will depend upon the attitude of those for whom the blessings are intended.

(3) The Restored and Penitent People. All the eschatological hopes of chapters 9 to 14 center around the restored Jewish community. Chapters 10 and 11 promise the restoration and reunion of Judah and Ephraim under the rule of the Messianic king and the triumph of the reunited people over all enemies; 11. 1-3 continues the thought; the rest of the chapter sounds a warning: exaltation and glorification can be theirs only on certain

[152] Notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, it seems best to interpret 13. 7-9 as describing the fate of the foolish shepherd and his flock; yet the passage also implies that the good shepherd was cruelly rejected and 12. 10, which alludes to the fate of the good shepherd, calls his rejection a "piercing" of Yahweh.

[153] It is hardly necessary to state that the rejection of the good shepherd in this parable cannot be made a direct prophecy of the rejection of Jesus. However, it may be regarded as a type of his rejection just as the good shepherd of the parable may be regarded as a type of the good shepherd of John 10.

conditions; their rebellious attitude has frequently robbed them of Yahweh's favor; it may do so again, and instead of immediate salvation additional judgments may be their fate.[154] Both 12. 1-9 and 14. 1-15 announce that these judgments will fall; at the same time they promise that in the end the Jews will triumph over all their enemies and enjoy abundant temporal prosperity.[155] Temporal prosperity, however, is only one phase of the eschatological hope of the chapters; for, according to 12. 10 to 13. 6, 9; 14. 20, 21, rich spiritual gifts also await the redeemed remnant. Uncleanness, even the spirit of uncleanness, will be taken away as well as everything else that in any wise might hinder direct personal communion with Yahweh. Ceremonial holiness plays a prominent part in the expectation,[156] but the emphasis which the author places on moral and spiritual regeneration[157] and heartfelt repentance[158] furnishes sufficient evidence to show that the author of these chapters, like the preexilic prophets, was not without proper appreciation of the essential elements of Yahweh religion.

(4) The Divine Sovereignty. Chapters 9 to 14 are not behind chapters 1 to 8 in announcing that during the Messianic era Yahweh will be supreme over all the nations. True, Jerusalem and Judah will enjoy in a special manner the divine favor; true, the nations will

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[154] 13. 7-9.

[155] According to 12. 2ff. the destructive blow will fall upon the enemies before they can take the city; according to 14. 1ff. the city will suffer temporary defeat; then Yahweh will appear, the nations will be completely routed, and their wealth will fall into the hands of the Jews. In both cases final triumph is assured.

[156] 14. 20, 21.

[157] 13. 1ff.

[158] 12. 10-14.

suffer terrible disasters; but when the last conflict is over, a remnant of the nations will "worship the king, Jehovah of hosts."[159] Yahweh will rule in the midst of his people, with Jerusalem as the center of his realm, and unto this center many nations will come, saying, "He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."[160]

12. The Book of Malachi

Name. In the case of all the other books in the collection of Minor Prophets the confession has to be made that little or nothing is known of the authors. Here the uncertainty extends even to the name, for it is doubtful that *Malachi*[1] is a proper name at all. If it is a noun, it may be translated "my messenger" or "my angel," neither of which seems quite appropriate as a child's name. Some take it to be an adjective, like Haggai,[2] meaning "angelic"; others consider it an abbreviated form of a name meaning "messenger of Yahweh,"[3] but names formed after the same pattern would suggest the translation "my messenger is Yahweh," which again seems unsuitable as a child's name. Of course analogy with the other books would favor the view that the name prefixed to a book is the name of its author, but over against this one consideration several may be adduced in favor of the theory that the prophecy is anonymous and that

[159] 14. 16-19.

[160] Isa. 2. 3.

[1] Hebrew, מַלְאָכִי, *Maleākhī*; Septuagint, Μαλαχίας, *Malachías*, Vulgate, *Malachias*.

[2] See above, p. 541.

[3] מַלְאָכְיָהוּ, *Maleākhiyyāh*.

Malachi was introduced in the heading, at a later time, from 3. 1, where the same Hebrew word is translated "my messenger" or "my angel":[4] (1) The similarity of Mal. 1. 1 with Zech. 9. 1 and 12. 1, the titles of two anonymous utterances, favors the theory that the former also was added by the collector of the Minor Prophets, to whom all three utterances came without headings.[5] (2) The name occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament. (3) Neither the Septuagint nor the Targum, the two oldest translations, understood it as a proper name.[6] (4) The absence of the father's name, given in the case of most other prophets.[7] (5) To these arguments may be added the considerations already mentioned, namely, the absence of all information concerning such a man and the difficulty of finding a meaning for the name that would make it appropriate as a child's name. But, whatever the original significance of the word may have been, by the second century A. D. it had come to be generally accepted as a proper name.[8]

Contents and Outline. The literary form of Malachi

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[4] From 3. 1 it has even been conjectured that the author was an incarnate angel.

[5] See above, p. 581. The compiler, understanding "my messenger" in 3. 1 as a proper name, or as in some way a designation of the author, or as a term descriptive of his office and so capable of being applied to him symbolically, embodied the expression in the title.

[6] The former reads "by the hand of his messenger"; the latter, "by the hand of my messenger, whose name is called Ezra the Scribe." The identification of the author with Ezra continued to be the Jewish tradition for many centuries.

[7] But compare, for instance, Obad. 1; Hab. 1. 1.

[8] The two Greek translations of Theodotion and Symmachus, both made in the second century A. D., take it as a proper name; so also the Syriac translation known as the Peshitto, coming from approximately the same time.

differs from that of the other prophetic books. Instead of attempting the rhetorical development of ideas, as was done by the earlier prophets, the author uses a dialectical and didactic style. He briefly states the truth which he desires to enforce; over against the simple proposition he sets an objection which he assumes may be raised; to this he replies, and in doing so reasserts and expands the original statement.[9] In the book of Malachi, therefore, we have the beginning of the method of exposition which later became universal in the synagogues and the Jewish schools.[10]

Because of the peculiar style of the book it has been questioned whether the oracles contained in it were ever delivered orally. If they were, as seems very probable, we have in the book, not a verbal reproduction, but an epitome of several addresses, arranged so systematically that the book has the appearance of a single continuous discourse. The peculiar method of instruction makes the style appear more prosaic than that of the earlier prophets; only once or twice does it rise to a higher level.[11] The diction, on the whole pure, betrays some marks of a late date.

The book falls naturally into three sections of unequal

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[9] Compare, for instance, 1. 2ff.; 1. 6ff.; 2. 10, 14, 17; 3. 7, 8, 13.

[10] Regarding this change in the method of prophetic instruction G. A. Smith says: "Just as with Zephaniah we saw prophecy passing into apocalypse, and with Habakkuk into the speculation of the schools of wisdom, so now in Malachi we perceive its transformation into the scholasticism of the rabbis." During the interval between Zechariah and Malachi, says the same author, "prophecy seems to have been driven from public life, from the sudden enforcement of truth in the face of the people to the more deliberate and orderly argument which marks the teacher who works in private" (*Minor Prophets*, II, p. 346).

[11] 3. 1ff.; 4. 1-3.

length,[12] with a prologue[13] and an epilogue.[14] The prologue forms the basis of all the subsequent utterances. In the opening words the prophet meets the criticism that Yahweh no longer loves his people[15] by the assertion, "I have loved you, saith Yahweh," and insists further that all they need to do to convince themselves of the divine love is to compare their own history with that of Edom.[16] Because of all he has done and is doing for the people Yahweh has a right to expect reverence and gratitude; but the character of the people's offerings shows that they have no proper regard or affection for him; their offerings are less acceptable than the worship of foreign nations; cursed be every one who thus insults Yahweh.[17] Unless the priests heed the warning and return to the ideals of the covenant made with Levi disgrace and contempt will be their portion.[18] Since Yahweh is the father of Israel, the individual Israelites are brothers and sisters, but they have disregarded the obligations springing from this relationship, by entering into mixed marriages and putting away Jewish wives. Yahweh abominates such conduct and demands that they desist from it.[19] The next section contains denunciations of the spirit of indifference and skepticism which is the root of all the religious and moral corruption con-

[12] 1. 6 to 2. 9; 2. 10-16; 2. 17 to 4. 3.

[13] 1. 2-5.

[14] 4. 4-6. With the possible exception of this epilogue, the entire book may be credited to one and the same author; even minor editorial additions and changes are few.

[15] They questioned the reality of the divine love chiefly because the promises of the earlier prophets had remained unfulfilled.

[16] 1. 2-5.

[17] 1. 6-14.

[18] 2. 1-9.

[19] 2. 10-16.

demned in the rest of the book: (1) The suffering of the pious and prosperity of the wicked have raised the question, Where is the God of justice? To which Yahweh replies that he is about to manifest himself in a purifying judgment.[20] (2) Since the skeptics doubted the interest of Yahweh, they saw no reason why they should continue to bring sacrifices to him. To which Yahweh replies: Let the people be honest in the payment of their tithes and offerings, and they will soon discover that Yahweh still lives and has the power and willingness to bless them.[21] (3) Once more the complaint is made that the wicked prosper while they that fear Yahweh are oppressed. To which reply is made that the unfairness is only apparent and temporary; in the end the wicked will be destroyed root and branch, while the righteous will be exalted forever.[22] The book closes with an exhortation to lay to heart the law of Moses and a promise of the speedy advent of Yahweh, preceded by his messenger.[23]

Title: The author and the subject of the prophecy (1. 1).

I. Prologue: Yahweh's Love for Israel (1. 2-5)

1. The divine love asserted (1. 2).
2. The divine love proved (1. 3-5).

II. Condemnation of Israel's Faithlessness (1. 6 to 2. 9).

1. Rebuke of faithless priests and people (1. 6-14).
   (1) Worthlessness of the people's sacrifices (1. 6-8).
   (2) Yahweh's displeasure (1. 9, 10).
   (3) Superiority of the service rendered among the nations (1. 11-13).
   (4) The curse of Yahweh (1. 14).

[20] 2. 17 to 3. 5.
[21] 3. 6-12.
[22] 3. 13 to 4. 3.
[23] 4. 4-6.

2. Curse pronounced upon the faithless priests (2. 1-9).
   (1) Immediate reformation the only way of escape (2. 1-4).
   (2) Covenant with Levi and the ideal priest (2. 5-7).
   (3) The apostate priests and their disgrace (2. 8, 9).

III. Condemnation of Mixed Marriages and Divorce (2. 10-16).

1. Disregard of the covenant obligations (2. 10).
2. Illegitimate marriage alliances (2. 11, 12).
3. Heartless divorces (2. 13-15).
4. Exhortation to desist from the evil practices (2. 16).

IV. Condemnation of Religious Indifference and Skepticism (2. 17 to 4. 3).

1. Yahweh's approach in judgment (2. 17 to 3. 5).
   (1) "Where is the God of justice?" (2. 17).
   (2) Yahweh's appearance as a refining fire (3. 1, 2).
   (3) Purification of priests and people (3. 3-5).
2. Wrongful withholding of tithes and offerings (3. 6-12).
   (1) Yahweh's immutability; the people's fickleness (3. 6).
   (2) Exhortation to honesty in the payment of religious dues (3. 7, 8).
   (3) Reward of honesty in the payment of religious dues (3. 9-12).
3. New defense of Yahweh's justice (3. 13 to 4. 3).
   (1) Complaint: the wicked prosper, the righteous suffer (3. 13-15).
   (2) Separation of the pious from the wicked (3. 16-18).
   (3) Utter destruction of the wicked (4. 1).
   (4) Exaltation and glorification of the righteous (4. 2, 3).

V. Closing Admonitions (4. 4-6).

1. Exhortation to faithful observance of the law (4. 4).
2. Elijah the messenger and his work of preparation (4. 5, 6).

Date. It is universally admitted that the internal evidence points conclusively to the postexilic period, when the Jews were under a governor,[24] and the Edomites had

[24] 1. 8.

been driven from their old home, [25] as the time when the prophecies of Malachi were delivered. Furthermore, all are agreed in fixing the date of Malachi later than the days of Haggai and Zechariah; for when he spoke the Temple was in existence and the sacrificial system in full swing; moreover, enough time had elapsed for the enthusiasm aroused by the two prophets named to die down and the Temple worship to become corrupted.[26] On the other hand, a comparison with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah shows that the sins condemned by Malachi and the reforms attempted by him are essentially the sins condemned and reforms urged by them. This correspondence has led practically all scholars to bring the preaching of Malachi into close connection with the efforts of these two reformers.[27] But at this point a difference of opinion arises, some placing the activity of Malachi before the coming of Ezra in 458 B. C., or at least before the first visit of Nehemiah, about 445; [28] while others place it near the second visit of Nehemiah, about 432, either before or immediately after.

In favor of the later date the following considerations are urged:

1. The close agreement between Malachi and Nehemiah.[29] The latter sought to correct the following

[25] 1. 2-5. In all probability Malachi has in mind the expulsion of the Edomites by the Nabatæan Arabs, which began in the sixth century and reached its culmination during the early part of the fifth.

[26] 1. 6ff.; 2. 1ff.; 3. 1, 10.

[27] The only important exceptions are H. Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen*, II, pp. 531-539; and H. Spoer, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XX, pp. 167-186; both of whom favor a Maccabean date; but their arguments have found no favor with other scholars.

[28] Neh. 1. 1; 2. 1.

[29] Compare Neh. 13. 23ff. (Ezra 9. 1ff.; 10. 1ff.) with Mal. 2. 10-16; Neh. 13. 10-12, 31, with Mal. 1. 7ff. and 3. 8-10; Neh. 13. 29 with Mal. 2. 8.

abuses: (1) the irreverent behavior of the high priest; (2) the neglect of the Temple service; (3) the nonpayment of tithes; (4) the desecration of the Sabbath; (5) marriage alliances with foreign women. Malachi aimed to abolish similar forms of wrongdoing; the only difference being, Nehemiah does not mention divorce, and Malachi is silent concerning Sabbath desecration.

2. The appeal for a more loyal observance of the law of Moses[30] presupposes the efforts of Ezra-Nehemiah to establish the authority of the law.[31]

3. The condemnation of sacrifices[32] and of dishonesty in the bringing of tithes and offerings[33] presupposes that the people were expected to provide for the sanctuary and the priests; but in the days of Ezra, or, at any rate, immediately after the latter's arrival, the government met the expense of the Temple service,[34] and similar provision was made by Darius.[35] On the other hand, in the days of Nehemiah provision was made for the support of the Temple service by the people,[36] which is in agreement with conditions presupposed in Malachi.[37]

4. While 1. 8 does not entirely exclude the possibility of Nehemiah being governor, it is more natural to see in the verse a reference to a foreign governor, one who was not averse to accepting gifts from the people.[38] Since, now, the argument of some scholars continues, several

[30] 4. 4.
[31] Compare Neh., chapters 8 to 10.
[32] 1. 7ff.
[33] 3. 6ff.
[34] Ezra 7. 15-24.
[35] Ezra 6. 9, 10.
[36] Neh. 10. 33ff.
[37] 3. 6ff. The neglect of the voluntary contributions makes it probable that some time had elapsed since the obligation was assumed.
[38] Compare Neh. 5. 14ff.

facts presented in the book exclude a date preceding the coming of Ezra and others a date immediately after his arrival, the most probable occasion may be found between Nehemiah's first and second visit to Jerusalem.

5. To the same period points the attitude of the prophet toward mixed marriages.[39] If Ezra's reform was as sweeping as is indicated in Ezra 10. 16, 17, some time must have elapsed before the same abuses broke out afresh. No attempt was made by Nehemiah to abolish these marriages until his second visit, which makes it probable that the abuses revived during his brief absence. Malachi uttered his denunciations against the new outbreak, either while Nehemiah was still away or soon after his return.

6. The fact that Nehemiah found the abuses condemned by Malachi in full swing makes it improbable that the latter had delivered his messages a number of years earlier, for it is difficult to believe that his earnest pleas were all in vain.

The above arguments are all based on the assumption that Ezra was the forerunner of Nehemiah, that the former came to Jerusalem in 458, the latter in 445/444 B. C. In recent years the priority of Ezra has been questioned; it has been claimed that Nehemiah preceded Ezra, and that the latter came to Jerusalem either in connection with Nehemiah's second visit or in the fourth century; while some scholars have gone so far as to deny the historicity of Ezra and to make him simply a personification of the spirit of later Judaism.[40] Those favoring the later date for Malachi may easily adjust

[39] 2. 11.

[40] For a more detailed discussion of this subject see F. C. Eiselen, *The Psalms and Other Sacred Writings*, pp. 308-312.

their arguments to this view by making the comparison with the period preceding the first visit of Nehemiah rather than with the time prior to 458 B. C. Bearing in mind this possible modification, wherever it may be necessary, are the arguments in favor of the later date in any sense conclusive? (1) Do the similarities between Malachi and Nehemiah necessarily point to the later date? Neh. 10. 30 undoubtedly implies that during the first year of Nehemiah's administration mixed marriages were in existence, just as Ezra 9. 2 implies that Ezra, on his arrival, found the same practice in vogue. Divorce is not mentioned by Nehemiah; which may mean that it was not a serious evil in his day; on the other hand, Malachi connects the divorce evil with the marrying of foreign women. Now, such a connection would be quite explicable at a time when these mixed marriages were still a novelty; for then many may have been tempted to put away their wives in order to be in fashion. Consequently, the similarities and differences on this point favor a date earlier than 445/444 B. C. rather than a date as late as 432 B. C. The other abuses condemned by Malachi, all of which have to do with the Temple service and the priesthood, were practiced during the first administration of Nehemiah, and may have existed in the postexilic community many years prior to 445 B. C. In other words, the facts upon which the first argument relies are as easily, if not more easily, explained on the assumption of the earlier date. (2) No one can doubt that the Jews possessed a code, or codes, of law prior to the public reading of the law in 445/444 B. C.[41] Why may not a religious zealot like Malachi have urged

[41] See F. C. Eiselen, *The Books of the Pentateuch*, Chapters XII and XVII.

the observance of the law even before Ezra-Nehemiah?[42] (3) There is no indication anywhere that between 518 and the coming of Ezra—whether he came in 458 or in 432 or in 397—the expense of the Temple service was borne by the government. (4) Since the other points are easily explained on the assumption of the earlier date, why not interpret 1. 8 as a reference to the Persian governor, or governors, ruling over the postexilic community before 458 or 445 B. C.? Why assume that a new governor was appointed during Nehemiah's absence rather than that he remained in control, carrying on the administration through deputies? (5) The fifth argument is covered by the remarks on the first. (6) If Malachi preached a short time before 444, and thus prepared the way for the reforms undertaken in that year, his efforts cannot be considered to have proved a failure.

To the present writer it seems that the internal evidence, as outlined by those who favor the later date, instead of proving their claims, practically excludes a date later than the reforms of 445/444 B. C. This conclusion finds further support in the hints scattered throughout the book as to the code of laws that was in force in the days of Malachi. On the whole, Malachi's exhortations are based on the Deuteronomic Code rather than upon the Priestly Code, which assumed supreme authority following the reform of 445/444.[43] The one

[42] The argument loses all its significance if it can be shown, as some scholars claim it can be shown, that the epilogue is a later addition (see below, p. 612).

[43] For instance, following Deuteronomy, Malachi makes no distinction between priests and Levites; in 2. 4-8 the terms "priest" and "Levi" are used interchangeably, and, according to 3. 3, all the sons of Levi are qualified to offer sacrifice. The Priestly Code permits the sacrificial animal to be either male or female, while Mal. 1. 4 mentions only the male.

passage which is sometimes regarded as a direct reference to the Priestly Code,[44] may be explained as marking a transition from the requirements of Deuteronomy[45] to those of the Priestly Code, a transition which, as Welch says, was made easier by the fact that in the post-exilic community, centered in the city of Jerusalem, all the Levites were attached to the Temple. Is it not possible, therefore, to regard 3. 10 as marking a stage in the history of tithing midway between Deuteronomy and the Priestly Code?

The Author and His Times. As has been pointed out, the book of Malachi is to be accepted as, in all probability, an anonymous writing. The book being anonymous, nothing can be known regarding the author's life, and regarding his spirit and character only such things as the book itself may reveal.[46] From the character of his message it is safe to infer that whoever he may have been, and whatever name he may have borne, the author is worthy to be called a "messenger of Yahweh." He is, first of all, a patriotic Jew who, as Smith says, loves his own people passionately, and hates the enemies of Israel fervently. "He can think," says the same author, "of no more convincing proof of Yahweh's love for Israel than the fact that Edom has recently been stricken

[44] 3. 10; compare Num. 18. 21ff.

[45] Deut. 14. 22ff.

[46] Epiphanius (see above, p. 505), regarding Malachi as the name of the prophet, states that he came from the town of Sopha in the territory of Zebulon; other traditions make him a Levite and a member of the Great Synagogue and relate that he died while still young. As we have seen, the Targum identifies the author with Ezra, and Jerome states that the same tradition was current among the Jews in his day. Other traditions credit the book to various other authors, among them Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. None of these traditions, however, are of any historical value.

down in accordance with Yahweh's will."[47] But he is more than a patriot; he is a man with a deep consciousness of communion with God, with a vigorous personality and strong convictions, and with keen insight into the needs and shortcomings of his contemporaries as well as into the loving purpose of Yahweh, which, he believes, will find its culmination in the establishment of the rule of God upon earth, ushered in by the terrible catastrophe of the day of Yahweh. Moreover, following in the footsteps of the earlier prophets, the unknown prophet declares, with no uncertain sound, the will of Yahweh to a priesthood and a people that has forgotten the covenant of old, announcing the final and awful doom of the faithless, and the exaltation and glorification of the faithful.

A study of the historical background necessitates a brief survey of conditions immediately following the completion of the temple in 516 B. C.[48]

(1) *Political Conditions.* During the interval between the completion of the Temple and the preaching of Malachi the struggle between Persia and Greece and two revolts in Egypt took place. To what extent the Jews were influenced by these movements we do not know. Herodotus declares that Syrians from Palestine, which might include Jews, served in the army of Xerxes; and it is not at all improbable that, especially in the wars with Egypt, they were called upon to furnish supplies for the Persian armies. On the whole, however, the attitude of the Persian court seems to have been friendly; so that,

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[47] *Malachi*, p. 10.

[48] The sources of information are chiefly the books of Haggai, Zechariah 1 to 8, and Ezra; a few hints may be gathered from extra-biblical writings.

with possibly two exceptions, the Jews bore the yoke patiently.[49] In 458 Ezra the scribe is said to have come from Babylonia, with rich presents from the king and his countrymen still in exile, and with extraordinary powers and privileges. After a brief period of activity Ezra disappeared and was not heard of again until after the appointment of Nehemiah as civil governor, in 445 B. C.[50] The latter, after rebuilding the walls of the city, undertook various social and religious reforms, in which he had the hearty support of Ezra. Some time later Nehemiah was recalled to the Persian court; when he returned to Jerusalem in 432 B. C., he found that the reforms of his former administration had been undone and that new evils were threatening the welfare of the community; immediately he set about to rectify all these abuses.

(2) *Moral and Religious Conditions.* Haggai and Zechariah labored earnestly to counteract the religious indifference which had grown up in the postexilic community during the years immediately following the return from Babylon in 537 B. C.[51] They succeeded in arousing sufficient enthusiasm for the completion of the Temple; but since the causes of the indifference were not removed the enthusiasm soon cooled and the former

[49] The two exceptions, noted in Ezra 4. 6 and 4. 7ff., may, perhaps, be traced to a revival of Jewish Messianic hopes. Xerxes came to the throne in 485 B. C.; only a short time before Egypt had revolted; these events the Jews may have connected with the Messianic utterances of Haggai and Zechariah, the revolt in Egypt with the shaking of the nations promised in Hag. 2. 7. The second manifestation of unrest may have been connected with the second revolt in Egypt, in 462 B. C., and may have been caused by similar expectations.

[50] For a consideration of the reliability of the biblical narrative concerning postexilic times, see above, p. 547, and reference given there.

[51] For the causes of this indifference, see above, pp. 546–549.

indifference with its accompanying evils reappeared. The glorious expectations of the preexilic prophets remained unrealized, nor were the new promises of Haggai and Zechariah fulfilled: the nations of the earth were not shaken,[52] and though the revolts in Egypt seemed to give promise of such shaking, in the end Persia remained supreme, while Judah continued to be governed by foreigners. The glory of Solomon's Temple was not equaled, much less surpassed;[53] taxes had to be paid and provisions furnished for the Persian armies, which kept the people poor. Harvests again failed as a result of drought and plagues of locusts,[54] which was in direct contradiction of the promise of Haggai.[55]

As a result of these various disappointments many in the nation began to ask, Where are the promises made to the fathers? What has become of the divine justice?[56] What of the divine interest in us? But if Yahweh does not care for us, why should we continue to waste our offerings and sacrifices in his service?[57] These disappointments were troublesome enough, but those in Judah who would retain faith in Yahweh were confronted by another perplexity. According to popular conception, piety should invariably be followed by prosperity, impiety by adversity; but during the first half of the fifth century a class of godless nobles had grown up in Jerusalem, who, by the use of unscrupulous means, accumulated wealth and lived in luxury and splendor, while many faithful Yahweh worshipers were compelled to

[52] Hag. 2. 6, 7.
[53] Hag. 2. 9.
[54] Mal. 3. 9ff.
[55] Hag. 2. 19.
[56] Mal. 2. 17.
[57] 3. 7-12.

endure poverty and hardship, and again the question arose, Where is the God of justice? Thus, if the people, looking within or without, compared present conditions with the promises of the prophets, they met on every hand grave problems and perplexities. Small wonder that many, who perhaps never had attained a strong faith in Yahweh, gave way to a temper of moroseness, skepticism, or even positive hostility to Yahweh.[58]

The moral and religious conditions reflected in Malachi and in the portions of Ezra and Nehemiah dealing with the same period were the outgrowth of this indifference and skepticism: (1) The first glimpse which the book gives is of the neglect of the Temple worship by both priests and people.[59] The priests performed their offices perfunctorily; anything, they thought, was good enough for Yahweh; consequently, they offered the lame and the blind upon the altar.[60] The maintenance of the Temple service was considered too costly and irksome.[61] By example and teaching the priests caused the people to stumble,[62] until all alike failed to render to Yahweh the reverence and honor due to his name.[63] (2) A second result of the spirit of indifference and skepticism was the dying down of the zeal for the maintenance of Israel's distinct and separate character as the people of Yahweh. An evidence of this lack of zeal was seen by the prophet

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[58] 3. 13ff.
[59] 1. 6 to 2. 9.
[60] 1. 7, 8.
[61] 1. 13.
[62] 2. 8.
[63] 1. 6. A similar unwillingness to pay the proper religious dues is reflected in 3. 7-10, where the prophet condemns the people for defrauding Yahweh by the withholding of tithes and offerings.

in the prevalence of mixed marriages,[64] which tended to break down the barriers between the Jewish community and the foreign nations and thus to open the door for the introduction of foreign practices and beliefs, which in the end might seriously affect the purity of the Yahweh religion. In some instances the marriages of the foreign woman was preceded by the putting away of a Jewish wife. Such conduct, the prophet believed, would have been impossible had the Jews appreciated the significance of their unique relation to Yahweh; but with faith in Yahweh waning, they forgot the duties they owed to one another as members of the same covenant nation[65] and lightly divorced their Jewish wives to make room for others. But even where divorce was not followed by alliance with a non-Jewish woman, the divorce itself implied a disregard of mutual obligations, and this in turn implied a waning faith. (3) The decline in religious fervor was followed by moral decline. Sorcery, adultery, and false swearing were common; the laborer, the fatherless, and the widow were oppressed.[66]

It must not be thought, however, that none escaped the skepticism and the corruption which followed. The very appearance of Malachi shows that there were in the community men who retained their faith; indeed, whose faith was made only stronger by the trials through which they passed.[67] They had the same experiences as those

[64] 2. 11, 12; compare Ezra 9. 1ff.; 10. 1ff.; Neh. 13. 23ff. Undoubtedly the words of Malachi are to be understood literally, not figuratively, as referring to apostasy from Yahweh to the worship of other gods. The latter interpretation is defended at length by C. C. Torrey, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1898, pp. 1ff. and by H. Winckler in the discussion referred to in note 27.

[65] 2. 10.

[66] 3. 5; compare Neh. 5.

[67] 3. 16.

who became skeptics and evildoers, but "instead of laying the blame on Yahweh . . . they recognized in Israel itself the cause of the disappointment. It was Israel's faithlessness and indifference that now as of old hindered the accomplishment of the prophetic visions. The one hope of their fulfillment lay in a more strenuous and loyal observance on Israel's part of the moral conditions of Yahweh's covenant."[68] Out of this group of religious zealots arose Malachi determined to arouse, if possible, a new enthusiasm and a new faith in the people who were rapidly drifting away from Yahweh and his ideals.

Teaching. The book of Malachi has been aptly described as "Prophecy within the Law." On the one hand, it reaffirms the truths taught by the great preexilic prophets, such as Yahweh's fatherly and loving care for Israel, his holiness and righteousness, the terrible judgment awaiting the wicked, and the exaltation of the righteous. On the other hand, unlike the earlier prophetic books, it places great stress on the law as a disciplinary rule of life, bitterly condemns its lax performance, and closes with the exhortation, "Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant."[69]

In fairness to Malachi the second characteristic must not be overemphasized to the exclusion of the first. True, he shared with other religious leaders of the postexilic period a high regard for the forms and institutions of religion[70] and of the law; but this new emphasis is due, not to lower religious conceptions, but to a different interpretation of the religious needs of the hour;

[68] R. L. Ottley, *The Hebrew Prophets*, p. 85.

[69] 4. 4.

[70] Compare Haggai, above, pp. 551, 552, and Zechariah, above, p. 585.

for Malachi agreed with Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah and other postexilic leaders that the people of their day could not be expected to worship Yahweh without the use of forms and institutions. Moreover, he saw, as many others must have seen, that after all prophecy, as represented by the preexilic prophets, had failed to produce the transformation for which they had toiled so persistently. Generation after generation they had sought to build up a pure and holy nation, but after the lapse of centuries the people appeared to be as far away from the ideal as ever. Consequently, the question must have arisen in the minds of many, whether the prophetic method was the one best adapted to the needs of the time, whether the people could be trusted to apply the principles of the prophetic religion to the daily life, or whether it would not be wiser to lay down specific rules and urge the people to observe these, and thus avoid the lapses of the past? The last question was answered in the affirmative, and the legalism of the postexilic period was born. However, in the beginning it was permeated by a spirit of intense moral earnestness; the exaltation of the letter of the law is a later development. Malachi was a prophet as truly as were Isaiah and Jeremiah, but, unlike these, he emphasized the embodiment of the prophetic spirit and the prophetic principles in external law.

Though the principal points in Malachi's teaching have been touched upon, a few of them deserve further mention: (1) The book teaches the Fatherhood of Yahweh, not in a universal sense, but in his relation to the Jewish community. Throughout its entire history Yahweh has manifested a fatherly interest in Israel.[71] This fact

[71] 1. 2-5.

the prophet makes the basis of all his appeals: Because Yahweh is the loving Father of the Jews, he has a right to claim their reverence and affection;[72] because as a Father he loves all alike, they should show brotherly love toward one another.[73] But his love can go out freely only toward the good and pious; the unrighteous, even among his own children, must bear the consequences of their wrongdoing.[74] (2) The brotherhood of man is taught, again not in its universal applications, but as applicable within the Jewish community. The individual Jews are related as brothers and sisters, and this relationship should determine their treatment of one another.[75] (3) Yahweh, who is a righteous God, demands of his worshipers a pure and righteous service. External forms of worship are an abomination to him, unless they are prompted by true devotion and accompanied by a holy and consistent life.[76] He would rather do without sacrifice and offerings than be compelled to receive them from those who neglect the weightier matters.[77] True, he desires the payment of tithes, but only as the practical expression of a loving faith.[78] Apparent inequalities in life do not militate against the divine righteousness, for in due time Yahweh will reveal himself a righteous Judge, by rewarding all according to their deeds.[79] (4) Mixed marriages and divorce receive the severest condemnation,[80] because, (*a*) they are sins against the spirit of brotherhood; (*b*) they threaten to corrupt the religion of Yahweh. (5) The significance

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[72] 1. 6.
[73] 2. 10.
[74] 2. 16; 3. 16 to 4. 3.
[75] 2. 10.
[76] 1. 6 to 2. 9.
[77] 1. 10.
[78] 3. 7, 8.
[79] 3. 16 to 4. 3.
[80] 2. 10-16.

of 1. 11 is overestimated by those who interpret it as teaching that the worship offered by foreign nations is in reality worship of Yahweh in various forms; nevertheless, the passage does prove that its author did not sympathize with the narrow exclusiveness of the post-exilic Judaism but recognized the acceptability to Yahweh of sacrifices and offerings presented to him outside of the promised land and, perhaps, by non-Jews.[81] (6) The Messianic teaching of Malachi is simple. The establishment of the kingdom of God will be preceded by the day of Yahweh, a day of sifting, on which Yahweh will separate the righteous from the wicked, and a day of terror, on which he will execute judgment upon the ungodly.[82] Following this divine manifestation the pious will enter upon a life of permanent prosperity and felicity. The Messianic king is not mentioned; Yahweh himself will interfere on behalf of his people. Malachi introduces the person of a messenger, Elijah the prophet,[83] who will be sent to prepare the way for the coming

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[81] For various interpretations of the verse see F. C. Eiselen, *The Minor Prophets*, pp. 711-714, and J. M. P. Smith, *Malachi*, pp. 31, 32.

[82] 3. 1-5; 3. 16 to 4. 3.

[83] Concerning this promise G. A. Smith makes the following suggestive remarks: "Malachi expects this prophecy... not in the continuance of the prophetic succession by the appearance of original personalities, developing further the great principles of their order, but in the return of the first prophet Elijah. This is surely the confession of prophecy that the number of her servants is exhausted and her message to Israel fulfilled. She can now do no more for the people than she has done. But she will summon up her old energy and fire in the return of her most powerful personality, and make one grand effort to convert the nation before the Lord come and strike it with judgment." It was only natural that Elijah should be singled out as the messenger from heaven, because he alone of all the prophets did not die a natural death, but "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2. 11).

of the judge, by preaching repentance and proclaiming the speedy approach of the great and terrible day of Yahweh.[84]

[84] 3. 1; 4. 5, 6. The last three verses of the book have no immediate connection with the preceding section; they must be understood, rather, as closing admonitions, belonging to the entire book, added by Malachi himself or, more probably, by a later writer (compare Hos. 14. 9). Recent commentators are inclined to accept the latter alternative, though Nowack, who considers verse 4 original, admits that the question can never be settled with absolute certainty. Marti advances the following reasons in favor of diversity of authorship: (1) The change in persons addressed; in verse 3 the pious are addressed, in verse 4 the Jews in general; (2) the expansion of 3. 1 in verses 5, 6 is not altogether in accord with the thought of the former; (3) The preceding prophecies never speak of the "day of Yahweh" or the "great and dreadful day of Yahweh" (verse 5; compare verse 1; 3. 17; 4. 3); (4) Malachi speaks only of "the law" (2. 8, 9); these verses of the "law of Moses" (verse 4); (5) Malachi frequently uses the formula "saith Yahweh of hosts," which is never found in these verses.

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